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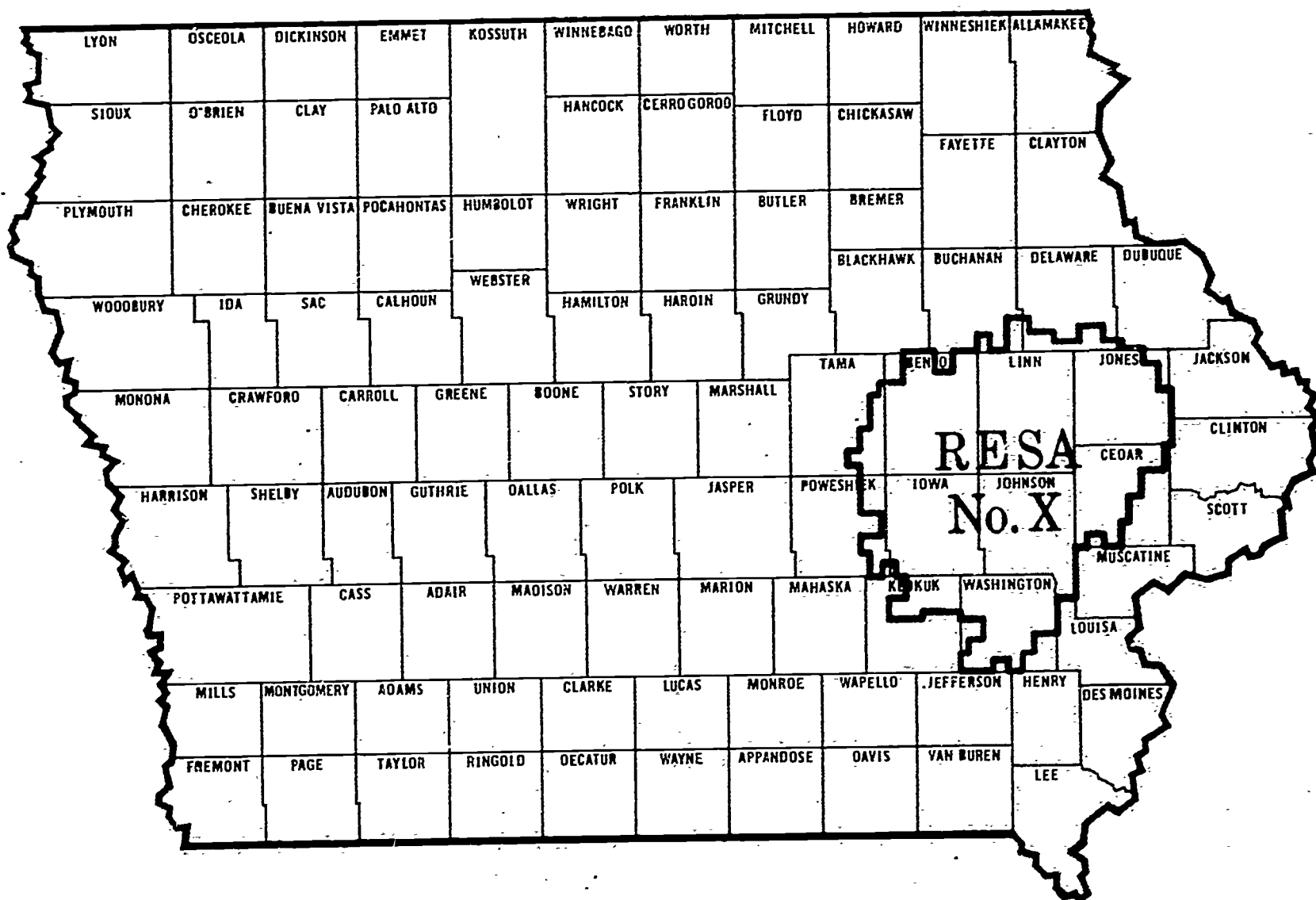
An extensive study, reported in three separately published sections, was made to determine primary aspects of the current consolidation and redistricting of local school districts. Basic procedures used to gather information included a survey of related literature, visitations to county and intermediate educational agencies in Iowa and other States, and utilization of consultants in the field. Section I introduces the problem and stresses the importance of relevant research. Study procedures are described and key terms are defined. The focal points of the literature review are the history and development of the middle echelon agency, its advantages and disadvantages, and the future of the intermediate unit. A description of the intermediate unit as it currently exists includes general descriptions of effective criteria, organization, administration, programs and services, financing, staffing, and pertinent legislation. Various organizational and operational patterns of intermediate units are analyzed, and 16 functioning intermediate units are cited for purposes of comparison and analysis. Documents EA 001 332 through 001 336 report the findings of a single study funded under Title III of ESEA. (JK)

# THE MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY IN IOWA

## Part I: Final Report

### SECTION ONE (CHAPTERS I-IV)

#### THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES



Prepared by

The Iowa Center for Research in School Administration  
College of Education, The University of Iowa

For the

Linn County Board of Education, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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THE MULTI-COUNTY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL  
SERVICE AGENCY IN IOWA

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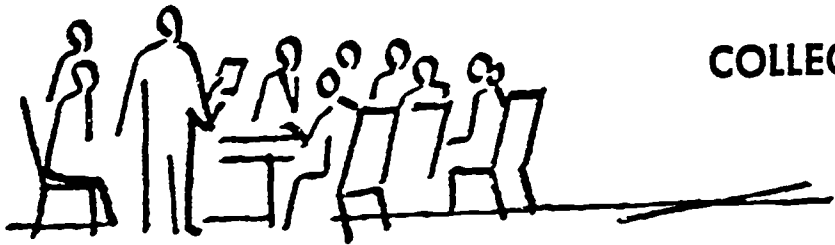
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Linn County Board of Education  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

September, 1967

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Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health,  
Education, and Welfare

# *The Iowa Center for Research in School Administration*



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION · THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

September 15, 1967

Mr. Ira E. Larson, Superintendent  
and Members of the Board of Education  
Linn County Schools  
County Office Building  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Dear Mr. Larson and Members of the Board:

At your request the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration has conducted a study to determine the appropriate functions and services of a multi-county intermediate education unit in the State of Iowa. The findings and recommendations of the yearlong study are transmitted in this report.

The report contains three sections. Section One, entitled "The Intermediate Unit of School Administration in the United States," contains a review of the literature concerning the intermediate unit, including its historical development, current status, and future development. Also included in this section is a description and analysis of organizational and operational characteristics of existing intermediate units in the United States.

In Section Two, "A Proposal for the Establishment of a Network of Multi-County Regional Educational Service Agencies in the State of Iowa," is found a description of the existing, local, and county educational agencies in the state. In addition, the section highlights the major needs of public education in Iowa. Further, a proposed network of multi-county regional educational service agencies in the state is outlined, considering the criteria for establishment, governance, financing, major benefits, and guidelines for a state legislative action program for the implementation of the recommendations.

In the final section of the report, Section Three, "Organizational and Operational Guidelines for a Model Multi-County Regional Educational Service Agency," a microscopic study of the organizational and operational guidelines of a model unit is presented. The area selected for this in-depth study includes the seven county school systems of Benton, Cedar, Iowa,

Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington Counties. This section includes recommended guidelines for the governing board of education, administrative organization, programs and services, staffing practices, housing requirements, financial needs, and relationships with other educational agencies in the public and private sectors, and with other local governmental subdivisions.

The development of a model for one area of the state can serve as a planning guide for the development of other units. It is felt that much of the rationale and many of the concepts offered in the development of the model have applicability for other service units.

In addition to this report, a condensed report designed for use in disseminating the findings of the study has been prepared.

It is hoped that you will concur that the time, effort, and funds devoted to this yearlong study, combined with the excellent cooperation of many, have made this a meaningful contribution to the restructuring of the county unit of school administration in order that it can fulfill its vital role in the state system of education.

You will find that the welfare of the student, constituent local school districts, and the state system of education were the foremost considerations throughout the study.

The findings and recommendations of the study are based on an extensive investigation of the regional educational service agency concept through a comprehensive review of the literature, visitations to operating service units in Iowa and throughout the nation, and interviews and surveys.

The Linn County Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools are to be commended for their vision in providing for a comprehensive study of the future role and structure of the middle echelon of school government in Iowa.

The conduct of this study provided a challenging and rewarding professional experience for the many who participated in its completion.

Respectfully submitted,

*E. Robert Stephens*

E. Robert Stephens, Project Director  
Assistant Professor of Educational  
Administration

ERS/jlc



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The contributions of many people were significant in the completion of this study.

Special commendation is given to Superintendent Ira E. Larson and the staff of the Linn County Schools for their invaluable assistance throughout the study.

The county superintendents and local school district superintendents of the seven county school systems included in the in-depth study provided valuable information and advice on various aspects of the study.

Gratitude is expressed to the county superintendents in the state who generously offered their time in the completion of several survey instruments. Special recognition is given to the superintendents and staffs of the service units in Iowa and other states who made it possible for the project staff and State Advisory Committee to gain firsthand impressions of their programs and services.

Appreciation is extended to members of the State Advisory Committee who gave freely of their time and energy in assisting with the design of the study, offering reactions to various phases of the study, and providing advice and counsel to the project staff. Special commendation is also given to Perry H. Grier, Ira E. Larson, and Louis L. Pickett who served in the capacity of reactors to some of the final chapters of the report. Dwight G. Bode, who served as an ex officio member of the State Advisory Committee and as a reactor, also deserves special recognition.

Members of the Staff of the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction also provided valuable assistance throughout the yearlong study.

Special acknowledgment is offered to Dr. Franklin D. Stone, Project Liaison, and other staff members of the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration; Dr. E. Gordon Richardson; and Fellows of the Program for Administrators of Educational Research and Information Systems.

The contributions of several research associates who contributed to various aspects of the study were invaluable in the successful completion of the study. Those deserving special thanks are: Edward F. Hanlon, Patricia Kelley, Joseph B. Kurtzman, David Little, Richard Riley, Dr. Wayne P. Truesdell, Dr. Ted R. Urich, and Edwin Van Bruggen.

Invaluable editorial assistance was provided by Dr. Beatrice A. Furner and Kenneth J. McCaffrey. Appreciation is extended to Janet L. Cochran who served as secretary to the project staff throughout the study and in the preparation of the final manuscript and to Darlene Fisher, Judith Nepple, and Geraldine Sheridan for assistance in the preparation of the final manuscript.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A great deal of interest has been expressed in recent years in Iowa in a restructuring of the county unit of school administration. Ninety-nine single county school systems were established as recently as 1948 to provide programs and services to local school districts comprising the county school system. It has become increasingly clear, however, that the single county unit cannot adequately perform the service role needed by public education in the state.

To the distinct credit of the county school superintendents of Iowa, it has been their professional organization that has been quickest to point out that in most situations, the single county school systems, as structured in the past, cannot completely adapt to needed changing service roles. The Iowa Association of County Superintendents has given impetus to the recognition of the potentials inherent in multi-county, intermediate units serving a larger geographic area, with larger student enrollments and financial bases. Illustrative of this attitude is the fact that during the past several years an increasing number of voluntary arrangements between county school systems have developed. These currently include the many situations in which a single administrator serves two or more counties, and the large number of multi-county special education arrangements.

In the 1966-67 school year, only 46 of the original 99 county school systems continued to employ a superintendent. The remaining 53 county units, served by 23 superintendents, are engaged in multi-county agreements. The majority of these involve a single administrator serving two county school systems although one of the superintendents served four counties.

Also during the 1966-67 school year, 60 counties were involved in some form of multi-county agreement for the purpose of providing programs in special education. The majority were two or three multi-county agreements, although six involved four counties and one was a joint five-county special education program.

In addition to their role in these activities the Iowa Association of County Superintendents endorsed and supported one of two statewide studies conducted in Iowa since 1960 relating to the restructuring of the county unit of school administration.

As further evidence of the need for and interest in the restructuring of the county unit of school administration, the Sixty-First Iowa General

Assembly in 1965 enacted several statutes related to the regional educational service concept. Two of the most significant were Senate File 550 and House File 553. Senate File 550 permitted the creation of a maximum of twenty area community college, or area vocational-technical districts in the state. House File 553 enacted permissive legislation allowing two or more contiguous counties to merge by joint resolution of the county boards of education, or by petition. The bill made the multi-county, regional educational service agency possible for Iowa. In the summer of 1966, the State Board of Public Instruction adopted a policy that mergers of county school systems approved under the provisions of House File 553 must fall within the same basic geographic boundaries established for area community college, or area vocational-technical districts organized under Senate File 550.

Subsequent to the action of the Sixty-First Iowa General Assembly, personnel of the Boone County Board of Education, in November, 1965, expressed an interest in applying for a planning grant under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to study the feasibility of multi-county instructional media resource centers in Iowa. Response to this suggestion was immediate and enthusiastic with many counties expressing an interest in a broader study of the total programs and services which might be offered by multi-county, intermediate units.

After discussion with groups and individuals representing the Iowa Association of County Superintendents, the State Department of Public Instruction, and the four graduate schools of education in the state, the Linn County Superintendent of Schools and the then President of the Iowa Association of County Superintendents submitted an application in the name of the Linn County Board of Education in February, 1966, to conduct this study to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Division of Plans and Supplementary Centers. In June, 1966, a one-year planning grant was approved and funded in the amount of \$97,000.

## II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study has several major purposes. The six objectives of the planning grant, as stated in the original application, appear below:

1. Determine the appropriate relationship between the multi-county intermediate unit and the local school districts; and the relationship between the intermediate unit and the State Department of Public Instruction.
2. Determine appropriate functions and services of multi-county intermediate unit under legislation comparable to House File 553.

3. Determine the organizational structure best suited to carry out the functions and services as determined by the proposed study to be appropriate to the multi-county intermediate unit.
4. Determine staffing requirements for providing services and performing functions as previously assigned to the intermediate unit.
5. Determine the necessary space, materials, and equipment required to carry out those functions and services.
6. Formulate and disseminate recommendations resulting from the study, under the planning grant, to local, county, state, and national educational groups, and to appropriate key members of the lay public.

In addition, several minor purposes of the study were enumerated in the application. They were stated in question form, as follows:

1. What is the correct working relationship between an intermediate unit and a local district, and between an intermediate unit and the State Department of Public Instruction, all under Iowa's new legislation pertaining to the area concept? (House File 553, Senate File 550.)
2. Is the existing permissive legislation adequate to promote effective intermediate districts, or are amendments and additional legislation necessary?
3. In what respects should the intermediate unit be an arm of the State Department of Public Instruction? What regulatory functions should be the area's responsibility?
4. What unique, innovative functions can be properly assigned to the intermediate unit?
5. What other functions and services should be a part of the intermediate unit's responsibility?
6. What organizational structure at the intermediate level will best serve to carry out the assigned functions and services?
7. What personnel will be required for the effective operation of a multi-county intermediate unit?
8. What are the job descriptions for staff members assigned major responsibilities?
9. Where should an intermediate office or offices be established?



10. What space requirements must be considered for an intermediate office?
11. What equipment requirements must be considered for an intermediate office?
12. What material requirements must be considered for an intermediate office?
13. How can the innovative ideas and exemplary programs recommended as a result of the study be best disseminated to the educators and general public of the state and nation?
14. How can we best gain widespread acceptance by educators and by the lay public of the area concept and of the recommended ideas and programs?

### III. CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

#### Contract With the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration

Following receipt of the project approval, the Linn County Board of Education contracted with the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, College of Education, University of Iowa, to complete the study. The contract was made with the Iowa Center for Research in School Administration on the recognition of the value of several supportive services which could be made available through the Center, including:

1. Availability of specialists in educational administration to conduct the study
2. Availability of specialists in various disciplines for consultative purposes
3. Availability of specialized libraries
4. Availability of data information centers and computer services
5. Facilities and equipment for the project staff
6. Dissemination of the results of the study through established channels and procedures

## The Project Staff

The project staff included a director, assistant director, two half-time research associates, and a number of specialists from various disciplines who worked on certain aspects of the study. Included in the latter group were specialists from social work, law, public finance, political science, special education, educational media, guidance and counseling, data processing, and educational facilities.

## State Advisory Committee

Assisting the staff in an advisory capacity was an eighteen member State Advisory Committee. The membership was representative of nearly all levels of public education in the state and some recognition in its make-up was also given to geographic areas of the state, and to school units of various sizes.

There were four local district school superintendents serving on the committee; five county school superintendents and one member of a county board of education; two representatives from an area vocational-technical district; four personnel from the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction; one representative from a public institution of higher education; and, one member from the state legislature. In addition, the current presidents of the Iowa Association of County Superintendents and Iowa Audio-Visual Association served as ex officio members of the committee.

The State Advisory Committee met on five occasions during the course of the yearlong study. The purpose of the first meeting was the orientation of the committee. At this time a 50 page "Orientation Brochure" was distributed. Included in the orientation materials was information on the background and organization of the study, a review of previous studies of the county school system in Iowa, a review of the legal framework under which the current study was conducted, and other pertinent background information. The remaining meetings were designed to secure reactions from the committee on various aspects of the study.

The meeting dates and major topic of discussion are listed below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Major Topic of Discussion</u>
July 25, 1966	Orientation and conduct of the study
October 31, 1966	Review of related studies and planning visitation schedule
February 27, 1967	Reaction discussion of visitations and review of related studies
May 14-15, 1967	Presentation of a first draft of the report
July 27-28, 1967	Presentation of the final draft of the report

Members of the State Advisory Committee accompanied staff members on visitations to intermediate units located out of state. Four groups of approximately equal size were organized to secure firsthand observations of eleven units located in five different states. In structuring the four teams, consideration was given to the need of having different levels of education represented on each team. A "Visitation Instrument" was prepared for members of the committee for use in the visitations.

#### Use of Consultants

Provision was made in the conduct of the study for consultation with authorities in various fields pertinent to the study. Included among these were personnel from the Department of Rural Education, National Education Association; the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction; and, institutions of higher education in Iowa and other states.

#### Visitations to Intermediate Units Outside the State of Iowa

In planning the study it was felt to be of utmost importance to secure firsthand impressions and information concerning nationally recognized intermediate units. In an attempt to ascertain optimum units for visitation, the views of leaders in educational administration throughout the country were sought. Based on a consensus of their opinions, the following visitation schedule was developed.

## Schedule of Visitations

### Group A:

1. King County Schools - Seattle, Washington
2. Snohomish County Schools - Everett, Washington
3. Multnomah County Intermediate Education District -  
Portland, Oregon

### Group B:

4. Wayne County Intermediate School District -  
Detroit, Michigan
5. Oakland County Intermediate School District -  
Pontiac, Michigan

### Group C:

6. Alameda County Intermediate Unit - Hayward, California
7. Riverside County Intermediate Unit - Riverside, California
8. San Diego County - San Diego, California
9. Other Related Programs: Chabot College - Hayward,  
California

### Group D:

10. Bucks County Schools - Doylestown, Pennsylvania
11. Allegheny County Schools - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In developing the schedule, consideration was given to geographic regions of the nation as well as outstanding operational features. The schedule included one community college with a strong vocational-technical program because of a recognized issue in Iowa concerning the governance of regional educational service agencies.

The director and assistant director of the study accompanied each of the four groups of State Advisory Committee members on the visitations.

### Visitations to Intermediate Units Within the State of Iowa

Several visitations to intermediate units within the State of Iowa were also made by the project staff.

Four criteria were used in the selection of visitation centers. These were:

1. Units "judged" to be outstanding
2. Units "judged" to be typical or representative county school systems
3. Units serving counties which are essentially urban or rural
4. Units serving single or multiple counties

Ten of the state's 98 county school systems, as shown below, were visited along with one of Iowa's newly organized area vocational-technical schools. The latter was chosen for inclusion in the visitation schedule because of the issue in the state of the governance of regional educational service agencies, and because it currently administers some programs to elementary and secondary schools in its district.

#### Schedule of Visitations

1. Black Hawk County School System, Waterloo, Iowa
2. Delaware County School System, Manchester, Iowa
3. Henry County School System, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
4. Johnson County School System, Iowa City, Iowa
5. Linn County School System, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
6. Polk County School System, Des Moines, Iowa
7. Scott-Muscatine County School System, Davenport, Iowa
8. Washington County School System, Washington, Iowa
9. Webster County School System, Fort Dodge, Iowa
10. Winneshiek County School System, Decorah, Iowa
11. Other Related Programs: Area XV Vocational-Technical School, Ottumwa, Iowa



## Major State and National Dissemination Activities

A number of state and national meetings and conferences were attended by staff members in the course of the yearlong study. Grouped according to meetings or conferences at which a paper or other informational material was presented by a project staff member, and other meetings or conferences attended, these included:

### Conferences or Meetings at Which a Paper Was Presented on the Study and/or the Regional Educational Service Unit of School Administration

1. State Convention, Iowa Association of County Superintendents, Des Moines, Iowa, October 19, 1966.
2. Annual Legislative Meeting, Iowa Association of County Superintendents, Des Moines, Iowa, November 16, 1966.
3. State Convention, Iowa Association of School Boards, Des Moines, Iowa, November 18, 1966.
4. Annual Meeting, Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, Iowa City, Iowa, November 30, 1966.
5. American Association of School Administrators Midwest Regional Drive-In Conference, Topeka, Kansas, April 16-18, 1967.
6. Central Regional Conference, National Association of State School Boards of Education, Des Moines, Iowa, April 19-20, 1967.
7. Annual Workshop for Iowa School Superintendents, Spirit Lake, Iowa, June 5-7, 1967.

### Other Conferences Attended by Project Staff Members

1. National Conference on Rural Education, Atlanta, Georgia, October 10-12, 1966.
2. Conference of the Great Plains School District Organization Project, Lincoln, Nebraska, November 29-30, 1966, and December 1, 1966.

A number of state and national dissemination activities are planned for the 1967-68 school year. The final report of the study which is outlined in the following section, is to be distributed to the following: county boards of education and county superintendents of schools; State Board of Public Instruction and State Department of Public Instruction; legislative leaders of the Iowa General Assembly; professional associations; institutions of higher education; and, numerous voluntary educational associations and organizations, and social and health agencies in the public and private sectors. A condensed popular version of the report is to be distributed to local school district boards of education and administrators, and to news media in the state.

In addition, a one-hour slide-tape presentation relating to the concept of the regional educational service agency, and the major findings of the study will be available for use by professional and lay associations.

Another major dissemination activity planned for the 1967-68 school year is a series of eight regional and one state convention of members of county boards of education and county superintendents of schools. The findings and recommendations of the study and other related topics concerning the merger of county school systems will be discussed at these meetings, which are to be funded, in part, by Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

#### Major Dissemination Activities Within the "Model" Regional Educational Service Agency

A number of dissemination activities for officials of county boards of education and local school district officials of the seven county school systems which served as the basis for the organizational and operational "model" regional educational service agency were held during the course of the yearlong study.

The seven county school superintendents participated in a number of informational and orientation meetings in the fall and winter of the 1966-67 school year.

A Steering Committee, composed of representatives of the seven county boards of education and county superintendents, was also formed and met on four occasions during the year. The meeting dates and major topic of discussion for each of the meetings are shown below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Major Topic of Discussion</u>
January 5, 1967	Progress report of the study; the concept of the regional education service agency; and major alternatives available to the seven county school systems.
January 27, 1967	Current services and programs of the seven county school systems
March 6, 1967	Progress report of the study
April 24, 1967	The merger of county school systems

Local school district officials participated in two informational meetings during the course of the study. In the spring of 1967, a meeting of all local school district superintendents of schools was held at which time a progress report of the study was made. In addition, local school district superintendents and members of local district boards of education participated in a general meeting at the conclusion of the study at which time the major findings and recommendations for the "model" regional educational service agency were made.

Members of the Steering Committee have indicated that the types of meetings outlined above will be continued during the 1967-68 school year.

#### IV. OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

In conducting this study, three facets were considered. The report is organized within the framework of these three facets. In each section, the purposes, procedures, and findings are reported in detail.

Section One, entitled "The Intermediate Unit of School Administration in the United States," contains a review of the literature on the intermediate unit, including its historical development, current status, and future development. Also included in this section is a description and analysis of organizational and operational characteristics of selected intermediate units in the United States.

In Section Two, "A Proposal For The Establishment of a Network of Multi-County, Regional Educational Service Agencies in the State of Iowa," is found a brief description of the existing state, local, county, and post high school educational agencies in the state. The section highlights the

major needs for a network of multi-county units in the state. presents a descriptive study of the current county unit of school administration, and proposes several criteria for the restructuring of these units to form multi-county. regional educational service agencies. Further, recommendations are presented concerning the role and function that regional educational service agencies should perform in the state system of education, and how the units should be governed and financed. The section is concluded with a discussion of a state legislative action program for the implementation of the recommendations.

In the final section of the report, Section Three, "Organizational and Operational Guidelines For a Model Multi-County. Regional Educational Service Agency," a microscopic study of the organizational and operational guidelines of a model unit is presented. These include guidelines for the governing board of education, administrative organization, programs and services, staffing practices, housing requirements, financial needs, communication techniques, and relationships with other educational agencies in the public and private sectors and with other local governmental subdivisions.

## V. OTHER UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

In addition to this report, several unpublished materials were prepared during the course of the yearlong study. The following is a listing of such materials:

1. "A Descriptive Study of the Intermediate Unit of School Administration in the United States."
2. "A Descriptive Study of the County Unit of School Administration in Iowa."
3. "Inventory of Health, Welfare and Social Agencies Serving Youth in Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties, State of Iowa."
4. "Inventory of Health, Welfare, and Social Agencies in the State of Iowa."
5. "The Adequate Size of a Local School District: A Review of the Literature."
6. "County Government Consolidation Movement in Iowa: A Review of the Literature."

7. A large number of "position papers" from various special interest groups which emphasized the regional approach to the provision of educational programs and services (e.g., data processing, special education, educational media).
8. Two slide-tape presentations, each of approximately 40 minutes in length. The first treats the concept of the regional educational service agency and its current national status. The second relates this concept to the State of Iowa.
9. Several transparency presentations, of approximately one hour in length, dealing with the major findings and recommendations of the study, and the concept of the regional educational service agency.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Decentralization of governmental units at the local level has been traditional in the United States. Although the Federal Constitution is silent on the question of education, the Tenth Amendment, by implication, places education among responsibilities reserved for each of the states. The states, in turn, have delegated the major administrative and operational responsibilities for public school educational programs to local school districts. Such delegation of function has long been an integral part of the overall philosophy of decentralized governmental units.

During the 1966-67 school year, there were 23,335 local public school districts in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority, organized as special district governmental units, have been provided with considerable autonomy for operation of the public schools. Boards of education generally have powers and responsibilities allowing them to function somewhat independently of other governmental agencies. However, these powers and responsibilities are delegated from the state level, and the states have provided in their constitutions or by statutory enactments for a governing agency and/or a chief educational officer who is responsible for developing and promoting a state system of public education.

As the state superintendents' responsibilities became increasingly complex, the chief state school officer was generally unable to provide adequately for the many and diverse local districts within the state. As a result, some type of intermediate agency between the state level and local school districts was often deemed necessary. As has been true in other areas of government, the intermediate agency has commonly followed previously established county lines. As an arm of the state, the intermediate level has discharged state responsibilities by maintaining contact with local school district officials and teachers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Research Division, Research Bulletin, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Washington: National Education Association, March, 1967), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States, a yearbook prepared by the Department of Rural Education (Washington: National Education Association, 1950), p. 30.

## I. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This section of the study presents a survey of the current national picture as related to applications of the intermediate concept in the various states. Public education is obviously involved in a period of profound change. Modern conditions have undoubtedly dictated many changes, but a concerted effort to improve the total educational enterprise is also apparent. As originally conceived, the intermediate level of school administration is representative of the needs of a previous era. In many instances, it no longer lends itself to currently existing conditions and needs.

A basic assumption in this study is that some type of intermediate structure remains a necessity in most states. A major question is whether intermediate agencies, as currently structured, are keeping pace in education; and if not, what organizational and philosophical modifications are necessary for such units to perform needed functions? Thus, a purpose of this study is to consider the current status, adaptive characteristics, and the potential of intermediate units in the educational system of today and tomorrow.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

One writer stated that "if the intermediate unit of school administration did not already exist, someone would have to invent it."<sup>1</sup> The intermediate unit has, indeed, been "invented." The oldest unit of this type is generally recognized to be the Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, but the traditional needs and functions of this office are rapidly diminishing. Due to these adaptations, the role of this agency is becoming less important. It would appear, however, that some type of regional agency between the local district and the state agency is still essential for a quality state system of education. Consideration of the current status and structure of such an agency thus becomes very important if it is to serve as a dynamic agency in the state educational system.

Thirty-two states still have some provision for a unit of educational administration functioning between the state and local levels. Seventeen states include only two levels in their overall structure, and one state,

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<sup>1</sup> George D. Strayer, A Design for the Administration of Public Education, Educational Administration Monograph No. 1, School of Education, Stanford University (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954).

Hawaii, has only one level. In many of the "three-level states," the middle unit continues to follow county lines, while several of the states in which no provision is made for a middle level have county-wide local school districts. Hawaii has only one school district. The fact that 32 states still make provision for some type of intermediate-level agency further emphasizes the need for research concerning the nature and function of the intermediate unit.

The benefits of local autonomy require little emphasis in this study. Inevitably, however, such decentralization breeds diversity, and from diversity stems unequal educational opportunity and a critical need for systematic coordination of effort. Reorganization of local districts notwithstanding, many school districts remain too small and inefficient to provide quality programs. Education has become extremely complex, and as its scope has broadened, many additional services have been demanded of it. Relatively few local districts are able to provide all essential services and programs. Increasing educational demands seem to cry out for a new kind of agency, or perhaps, a changed role for an existing agency, the intermediate unit. The importance of thorough study of current intermediate adaptations, possibilities, and potentialities is thus further emphasized.

A need exists for the modern intermediate unit to perform some traditional functions as an arm of the state, along with providing additional programs and services. The need for coordination among local districts has also been stressed by writers concerned with the developing intermediate unit:

It is this coordinating function that is perhaps the most demanding task of the intermediate unit. We imply, pointedly, by coordination something more than togetherness, something more than fiscal cooperation, and something more than fringe service: we imply a shared concern for problems and a collaborative effort toward their solution.<sup>1</sup>

The same writers observed that historically the intermediate unit, while often criticized, has been able to survive its own weaknesses. It has been emphasized, however, that the mere fact of survival does not warrant con-

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<sup>1</sup>Remaking the Educational Order: Educational Change and the Intermediate Unit (Santa Barbara: University of California at Santa Barbara, Center for Coordinated Education, 1965), pp. 4-5.

tinuance, but there is a greater need to strengthen a possible weak link in a state school system than to remove it, creating a gap. The writers stated that "the advantage lies neither in eliminating the intermediate unit nor in accepting its limitations, but in demanding that it rise to its potential and to the need it must fulfill."<sup>1</sup>

Additional evidence of the need for study of the intermediate level agency is found through reference to the official position of the American Association of School Administrators. Since 1954, this organization, in a series of formal resolutions, has stressed the importance of study of the intermediate unit of school administration. This organization's resolutions, pertinent to the subject, follow in chronological order:

February, 1954 -- Resolution No. 17

Intermediate District Superintendencies

The Association believes that the county superintendency and other similar intermediate administrative positions are essential to the provision of adequate educational opportunities. It commends state associations of county superintendents, colleges and universities, state legislatures, and the Commission on the Intermediate Unit of School Administration for the efforts being made to improve the quality of educational services and leadership provided through the county superintendency.

April, 1955 - - Resolution No. 4

Intermediate District Superintendencies

The Association believes that intermediate administrative positions are essential in the provision of adequate educational opportunities. It commends state associations of county superintendents, colleges, and universities, state legislatures, and the Commission on the Intermediate Unit of School Administration for the efforts being made to improve the quality of educational leadership provided through the intermediate district superintendency.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.



February, 1956 - - Resolution No. 4

Public Schools and Educational Administration

. . . The Association is gratified by the progress being made in reorganization of local school districts into more effective administrative units and in strengthening intermediate districts of school administration. Since adequate administrative organization is a prerequisite to efficient use of school funds, provision of a good educational program and effective exercise of local initiative and control, we urge that these efforts to improve administrative organization be continued . . .

February, 1957 - - Resolution No. 12

Administrative Organization

Recognizing the serious need for administrative organization at state, intermediate, and local district levels that can attract and hold high quality teachers, supervisors, and administrators and enable them to work to best advantage; that can use available school financial resources and instructional facilities efficiently; and that can provide an educational program of the scope and quality needed to meet a wide range of needs, interests, and abilities, the Association commends the states that have enacted workable statutes to provide for the orderly and expeditious reorganization of local districts of defensible size, and the states that have enacted legislation and worked toward constitutional amendments needed to strengthen and improve state departments of education.

The Association especially commends the county superintendents in many states for their efforts to develop their offices so as to provide high quality instructional leadership and educational services, and the administrators and lay leaders who have exercised leadership in local school district reorganization.



February, 1959 - - Resolution No. 15

School District Organization

The Association commends legislatures, state departments of education, boards of education, school administrators, and other citizens who have assisted in the elimination of those small school districts which are inadequate. It further commends the progress that has been made in some states toward the improvement of the intermediate unit as an effective instrument for providing special services to the local districts. The Association deplores the existence of non-operating school districts which serve no purpose other than to provide an avenue of escape from sharing a fair and just responsibility for school support.

February, 1960 - - Resolution No. 26

Administrators

School administrators study ways and means of improving organizational structure and take leadership in promoting desirable reorganization of administrative units and services at local, intermediate, and state levels.

March, 1961 - - Resolution No. 6

Shared Services

The American Association of School Administrators firmly believes that because of the geographical status of many school districts in the nation, a system of shared educational services should be provided. Organizations such as the intermediate unit as it relates to the several states are commended by the Association as a valuable asset to American education.

February, 1962 - - Resolution No. 7

Intermediate District

The Association urges the A.A.S.A. Executive Committee to initiate a comprehensive study of the intermediate district of school administration. The study should be designed to clarify the role of the intermediate district and its relationship to other state and local units of school administration. The study should seek to establish sound principles and procedures and reasonable standards for the organization, financial support, staffing, and operation of an intermediate district unit. Also, it should recommend steps that should be taken through legislation or other means toward the development of such intermediate districts.

February, 1964 - - Resolution No. 19

School District Organization

The Association urges action on state and local levels which would establish strong and efficient school administrative units. The Association recommends legislation at the state level to abolish all nonoperating school districts and to hasten more effective school district programs. Further, the Association urges the Executive Committee to initiate a comprehensive study of the intermediate district of school administration designed to clarify the role of the intermediate district and its relationship to other state and local units of school administration.

February, 1967 - - Resolution No. 15

Intermediate Educational Service Agencies

The Association recognizes that the achievement of excellence in our public school programs requires competent curriculum leadership, the services of clinical teams, programs designed for continuous staff development, an expanding range of instructional materials, media services, and many other programs dependent on highly specialized personnel, facilities, and equipment. It further recognizes that effective and econo-

mical provision of such services is beyond the capability of many local school districts. We therefore urge that administrators give serious attention to the establishment or strengthening of a series of intermediate educational service agencies designed as an integral part of the state system of public education while at the same time eliminating small and inefficient intermediate units.<sup>1</sup>

### III. PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY

Three basic procedures were used to gather information presented in this portion of the study. The procedures included (1) a survey and analysis of related literature, (2) visitations to various county and intermediate educational agencies in the state of Iowa and the several states, and (3) utilization of consultants in the field.

Representative samples of the literature dealing with the intermediate district of school administration were considered. The somewhat limited textbook treatments of the subject, doctoral dissertations, monographs, special reports, journal articles, materials provided by various operating intermediate units, and findings and conclusions from studies of the intermediate concept conducted by state departments of education, commissions, universities, special committees, and other agencies and organizations were included in the "literature" classification.

Personal observation by means of extended visitations was also utilized. Intermediate units in fourteen states were visited by the project staff.

University of Iowa staff personnel and State Advisory Committee members served in consultative roles, and consultants from the U.S. Office of Education, National Education Association, and American Association of School Administrators and representatives from a number of other professional organizations were consulted. County and intermediate unit administrators and personnel proved to be valuable resource persons.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert M. Isenberg, "The Intermediate Administrative Unit: A Chronology of Resolutions Adopted by the American Association of School Administrators" (March, 1967), mimeographed.

#### IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to provide for commonality of usage, important terms used in this study are defined below.

##### Intermediate Unit

Many definitions and concepts of the intermediate unit have been used in the literature with varying conceptual commonalities and differences. The intermediate unit is seen by some writers in an older county-unit context, while others view it as an emerging administrative form with broad area or regional connotations.

For illustrative purposes, several definitions of the intermediate unit will be presented, followed by a definition to be used in the context of this report.

The intermediate unit is usually defined as some type of educational unit operating between local school districts and the state department of education. This definition makes no differentiation between the older county-unit and the emerging regional concept. The main concept in this definition is that the intermediate unit is an administrative organization functioning between the state and local school districts, serving both agencies. According to this interpretation, the area served "always includes two or more local districts."<sup>1</sup>

A similar, but somewhat expanded definition, refers to the intermediate unit as:

. . . an area comprising the territory of two or more basic administrative units and having a board, or officer, or both responsible for performing stipulated services for the basic administrative units or for supervising their fiscal, administrative, or educational functions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, National Commission on the Intermediate Unit, Effective Intermediate Units, A Guide for Development (Washington: Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, 1955), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>National Commission on School District Reorganization, Your School District (Washington: National Education Association, 1948) p. 47.



The U.S. Office of Education has provided a similar functional definition. The "administrative unit, intermediate" was described as:

A unit smaller than the state which exists primarily to provide consultative, advisory, or statistical services to local basic administrative units or to exercise certain regulatory and inspectorial functions over local basic administrative units. An intermediate unit may operate schools and contract for school services, but it does not exist primarily to render such services. Such units may or may not have taxing or bonding power.<sup>1</sup>

More recent descriptions have emphasized the regional concept and the coordinative and supplementary service functions. One source defined this unit of school administration as "an agency that operates at a regional level, giving coordination and supplementary services to local districts and serving as a link between these basic administrative units and the state education authority."<sup>2</sup> These writers indicated that the Office of the County Superintendent of Schools has been the traditional intermediate unit, but changing circumstances are resulting in a revision of the intermediate unit.<sup>3</sup>

Another source described the intermediate administrative district as "a regional unit, standing as connective tissue between the local district and the state office."<sup>4</sup> Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee cited the connective or intermediate aspects between the state department of education and local school districts. They identified two common erroneous uses of the term: (1) describing the county-wide "local" school district as an intermediate unit, and (2) referring to a regional subdistrict of a large-city school system as an intermediate unit.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Office of Education, The Common Core of State Educational Information, State Educational Records and Reports Series Handbook I, Bulletin 1953, No. 8 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Alvin E. Rhodes (ed.), National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units (Washington: National Education Association, 1963), pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Remaking the Educational Order, op.cit., p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Roald F. Campbell, Luvern L. Cunningham, Roderick F. McPhee, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1965), pp. 110-111.



In California, the intermediate unit has been defined as an "agency that operates at a multi-district level, providing coordination and supplementary services and serving as a link between the district units and the state."<sup>1</sup> The report of "The Committee of Ten" added, however, that the traditional intermediate unit in California has been the office of the county superintendent of schools.<sup>2</sup>

Pennsylvania has recently described the intermediate unit in the following terms:

. . . that echelon of a three-echelon state education system (school district, intermediate unit, and state education department) which provides consultative, advisory, or educational program services to school districts. The responsibility for administration, supervision and program operation belongs to school districts. The intermediate unit provides ancillary services necessary to improve the state system of education.<sup>3</sup>

Michigan is also using the middle-echelon concept to define the intermediate unit, legally designated in that state as the "Intermediate School District." Michigan's descriptive definition is:

. . . the middle echelon of a state system of schools made up of a state education office, numerous local school districts (public corporations), and less numerous intermediate school districts (also public corporations).<sup>4</sup>

The definition of intermediate unit used in the current study is based primarily on the Pennsylvania usage and the Michigan adaptation. In this report, the term intermediate unit will be defined as the middle echelon of

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<sup>1</sup>California Association of County Superintendents of Schools and County Boards of Education Section of California School Boards Association, "The Committee of Ten," The Future Role and Function, Size, Structure, and Organization of the Intermediate Unit in California (September, 1966), p.12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Pennsylvania State Board of Education, An Intermediate Unit for Pennsylvania (January, 1967), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>"The Intermediate School District -- Middle Echelon of Michigan's Three Echelon State System of Schools" (material furnished by Wayne County Intermediate School District, Detroit, Michigan, December, 1966), mimeographed.

a three-echelon state system of education. This middle-echelon agency will be viewed as providing consultative, advisory, or educational program services to local school districts and serving intermediary-type functions between the state education department and the local districts. As used herein, the intermediate unit will be considered a multi-county or regional agency organized principally to serve local school districts. To emphasize the multi-county regional or area base and the service role, the term "Regional Educational Service Agency" (RESA) will share the same meaning as the term intermediate unit.

### School District

In its more general usage, this term refers to a local unit of government, possessing quasi-corporate powers, and established or empowered by state law to conduct and administer a public school or a system of public schools. This district is usually controlled by a board of education, has local taxing power, and authority to make contracts. There are various types of school districts at the local level including common, city, independent, consolidated, reorganized, separate high school, union, community, town, township, and county-unit districts.<sup>1</sup>

The various types of districts at the local level will be referred to as school districts, and it is assumed that all maintain schools and directly operate educational programs. The school district will be treated as the third echelon in a three-level state system composed of the state education agency, the intermediate unit (RESA), and the local school district. As related to the intermediate unit, the school district will also be called a constituent or a constituent district.

### Basic or Local Administrative Unit

This term denotes:

. . . an area in which a single board or officer has the immediate responsibility for the direct administration

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<sup>1</sup> Subcommittee of the Committee for the White House Conference on Education, "In What Ways Can We Organize Our Schools More Efficiently and Economically?" A Statistical Survey of School District Reorganization in the United States, 1954-55 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 1.

of all the schools located therein. Its distinguishing feature is that it is a quasi-corporation with a board or chief school officer that has the responsibility for, and either complete or partial autonomy in the administration of all public schools within its boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

#### Attendance Unit

The area from which pupils attend a single school is termed an attendance unit. It is not a quasi-corporation and does not possess independent administrative powers. Its powers are derived from a basic administrative unit.<sup>2</sup>

#### Consolidated School District, Reorganized School District

In this report, these are synonymous terms and include any local school district now legally organized to serve territory "once served by two or more districts."<sup>3</sup>

#### School District Reorganization

The act of legally changing the designation of a school district, changing its geographic area, or incorporating a part or all of a school district with an adjoining district is termed school district reorganization.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>National Commission on School District Reorganization, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 182.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 483.

## State Education Agency

The term state education agency refers to:

. . . a state department of education under the administration of a superintendent or commissioner of education, usually consisting also of a state board of education that is the general policy-making body for the state within the limits set by the constitution and the statutes.<sup>1</sup>

The state agency, the state authority, the state education department, state department of education, and the state department of public instruction are used synonymously with the term state education agency.

## V. ORGANIZATION OF SECTION ONE OF THE REPORT

Section One of the report contains four chapters. Chapter I introduces the problem and stresses the importance and timeliness of research concerned with the intermediate unit. The study procedures are briefly described, and several key terms defined.

A limited review of literature, related to county and intermediate units, is presented in Chapter II. The focal points are the history and development of the middle echelon agency and the advantages and disadvantages inherent in such an organizational form. A consideration of the future of the intermediate unit is also briefly treated.

Chapter III is devoted to a description of the intermediate unit of school administration, as it currently exists. Included are general descriptions of criteria, organization, administration, programs and services, financing, staffing, and pertinent legislation.

Intermediate unit organizational and operational patterns are analyzed in Chapter IV, the concluding chapter in Section One. Sixteen illustrative agencies are cited for purposes of analysis of the characteristics identified in Chapter III.

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<sup>1</sup> National Commission on School District Reorganization, op.cit., p. 66.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II presents a review of the literature related to the intermediate unit. The historical development of the county or intermediate echelon of the state system of public education and the developmental sequence in several illustrative states is summarized. The current national status is considered, and advantages and disadvantages of this organizational form are discussed. The future of this unit of school administration is also discussed.

#### I. HISTORY OF THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT

Intermediate units, as traditionally constituted, are creatures of another age. They, or their predecessors, the office of the county superintendent of schools, were created to assist state educational officials in operating a system of schools primarily concerned with elementary instruction.

In one respect, the intermediate school district superintendency has its roots in the creation of county government. McLure noted that when states were first organized, the county was established as a local unit of government somewhat after the system developed in England. In America, as in England, the county as a unit of government was further subdivided, the most common division being the township.<sup>1</sup>

The county was regarded as the most suitable geographical and legal territory for the general administration of public education and other functions of government. County school offices were conceived as suitable administrative units for assisting the state education office. According to McLure, "the county superintendent thus became an intermediary in the administration of schools between the state department of education and the local community or neighborhood school district."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William P. McLure, The Intermediate Administrative School District in the United States (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1956), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 2.



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To fully comprehend the early development of the county or intermediate unit, it is necessary to understand something of the early state laws regarding public education. These statutes were mainly permissive in nature and allowed groups of people the privilege of forming local school districts and levying taxes to support them. The state's responsibility was usually perceived as limited to "the encouragement of schools." This permissive attitude, combined with an almost overwhelming desire to keep administration close to the people, resulted in the development of thousands of small school districts. Under such conditions, most states very early established the position of state superintendent or chief state school officer. His major responsibility was guiding, supervising, and regulating local districts.<sup>1</sup> Inadequate transportation and communication, coupled with the multitude of small districts, made the state school officer's task difficult.

A dire need for a professional school official with a familiarity with local conditions was apparent. Particularly acute was the demand for an agency and a regional educational official to oversee the very small districts and to enforce state regulations. It was logical that the existing county lines were followed in the structuring of such an agency and this was done in many states. The township, however, was the first intermediate organization in some Midwestern states, notably Michigan and Indiana.<sup>2</sup>

The organization of the intermediate agency was frequently resisted as an unwanted intrusion by the state. In other instances, the intermediate unit was seen as a protector of local control against the centralization of authority. Despite these reactions, the intermediate administrative unit was established in many states, by state action, as a political subdivision organized to assist in carrying out the state's educational function.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, Education Beyond High School Age: The Community College (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1962), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar L. Morphet, Roe L. Johns, and Theodore L. Reller, Educational Organization and Administration, Second Edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 276.

<sup>3</sup>Shirley Cooper and Charles O. Fitzwater, County School Administration (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1954), Chapters IV and V.

The first county superintendent's office was created in Delaware in 1829. Other states followed in relatively rapid succession, and by 1879 only four of the Union's 38 states had not established the office.<sup>1</sup> Delaware, the first to enact legislation creating the county superintendency, "later abandoned the office to operate its school system from the state central office."<sup>2</sup> Several states, including Mississippi, California, Idaho, Texas, and Arizona, provided for the office of county superintendent of schools, abolished it, only to reinstate it later.<sup>3</sup> Thus, by 1879, 34 states had established the county superintendency, while four states Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont, substituted a supervisory district or union for the county unit.<sup>4</sup> Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Hawaii, and Alaska are the only states that have never created the office of county superintendent.<sup>5</sup>

The county educational agency and the broader area intermediate unit evolved in various ways throughout the country. Although there are many developmental similarities between the two, identical basic patterns are difficult to identify. Each state's needs differed, and definite guidelines were not available when the organizational decisions were made in the Nineteenth Century.

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<sup>1</sup>The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States,  
A Yearbook prepared by the Department of Rural Education (Washington:  
National Education Association, 1950), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>McLure, loc.cit.

<sup>3</sup>The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States, loc.cit.

<sup>4</sup>McLure, loc.cit.

<sup>5</sup>Cooper and Fitzwater, op.cit., p. 137.

At that time, "educational administration was in its infancy; legislators developed organizational structures that seemed to be most practical for their particular time in history."<sup>1</sup>

Because of the deviations in patterns of development from state to state and region to region, the evolution of the county and/or intermediate unit in several selected states is considered. Commonalities and differences are readily apparent.

### Michigan

Michigan is an example of the many states in which the intermediate unit has been essentially a county unit.

In Michigan the territorial laws of 1827 and 1829 provided for township officials with some jurisdiction over schools. These trustees were required to divide the townships into school districts; therefore, townships actually became the first intermediate units in Michigan.<sup>2</sup>

The State Constitution of 1835 required local officials to supervise the schools, but an 1837 law created school inspectors for each of the townships. Legislation passed in 1867 mandated an elected county superintendent of schools. This plan was repealed, and the township inspectors were reestablished. In 1891, the chief county school officer returned to the scene under the title, "county school commissioner."<sup>3</sup>

The fifty-year period from 1841 to 1891 was marked by an almost constant struggle to determine whether the county or the township should be the intermediate unit of school administration. There was continuing criticism of township officials who were politicians attempting to deal with such problems as teacher certification, supervision, and reporting to the state education office. There was, however, much reluctance to

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<sup>1</sup>Glenn W. Hoffman, The Flexible Intermediate Unit in California: A Study of Regional Educational Activities Performed Cooperatively By County Offices of Education (June, 1966), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Harlan D. Beem and H. Thomas James, A Report of the Michigan Committee for the Study of the Intermediate Unit of School Administration (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1956).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

relinquish control at the township level to any larger unit such as the county. Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee reported that this controversy was not really resolved in the Detroit area (Wayne County) until 1937. In that year, board members of local school districts were authorized to select a county board of education with the county board responsible for the election of the county superintendent of schools. In 1947 the plan was made uniform for the entire state.<sup>1</sup> However, the legislature failed to grant tax levying powers to the county boards. Consequently, the county offices of education had almost no funds with which to operate.<sup>2</sup>

It was 1953 before special legislation allowed Michigan counties with 180,000 or more population to levy a county tax for the support of special education programs. In 1955, the population requirement was removed so that every county could support a program of services.<sup>3</sup>

In 1953 the Michigan County Superintendents Association instigated a study which would eventually culminate in significant legislation. Beem and James reported that very limited conceptions of the role of the county school office were prevalent. This was at least partially attributed to the fact that the county educational unit was a long-standing organizational form in the public school system and had been closely associated with only elementary education.<sup>4</sup>

Legislation to reorganize the county office of education into a system of intermediate units was introduced in three consecutive sessions of the Michigan legislature. Public Act No. 90 was passed in 1962. According to Hoffman, the Act provided for the following:

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<sup>1</sup>Roald F. Campbell, Luvern L. Cunningham, and Roderick F. McPhee, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1965), pp. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup>Robert M. Isenberg, "Research and Legislation on the Intermediate Unit" an address to the Washington State County Superintendents of Schools Association Workshop, Seattle, Washington, June, 1958, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Beem and James, loc. cit.



1. The elimination of all county school districts and in their places and in the same boundaries, substitution of a system of intermediate school districts which possessed the same rights and privileges of the county district but with certain additional changes and responsibilities

2. A method for reorganizing local school districts in such a way that they be wholly situated within an intermediate district

3. An elected intermediate board of five members, except in re-organized intermediate districts where seven would be required--said board being provided complete control for the receiving and disbursement of funds, for studying programs, for the employment of superintendent and staff, and for setting the budget annually

4. The intermediate school district being given the same rights and privileges as a taxing agent and treated as other taxing agents

5. A map to be prepared annually and filed with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

6. An annual school census

7. A program of special services to be established for mentally and physically handicapped children

8. The intermediate unit being responsible for the directing and supervising of cooperative educational programs on behalf of the constituent school districts which requested such services

9. The conducting of cooperative programs mutually agreed upon by boards of not more than three intermediate districts

10. The establishment of juvenile hall schools as directed by the board of supervisors

11. Reorganization of not more than three intermediate school districts when the reorganization had been approved by a majority of the voters

12. The forced reorganization of any intermediate school district which had less than 5,000 students

13. State financial aid.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 28-29.



The 1964 and 1965 legislatures provided additional state financing, and as of January, 1966, 61 intermediate units existed in Michigan. Thirteen combined two or more counties; the remainder followed individual county lines.<sup>1</sup>

### New York

In New York, as in Michigan, there is a long history of activity related to the intermediate unit. However, the middle-echelon organization has taken a somewhat different form than in Michigan and other Midwestern states. New York's intermediate-type agency is not generally coterminous with the county and is at least partially indicative of the usual New England developmental pattern.

Legislation passed in New York in 1795 established the "town commission" which was given the duty to (1) apportion state school money among the town's several school districts, (2) confer with the school's trustees about teacher qualifications, and (3) exercise some supervision over the course of study. This early provision was strengthened in 1812 and the arrangement continued until 1841 when legislation provided for what was called a "deputy superintendent." Under terms of this law, the deputy superintendent was appointed by the county board of supervisors and was considered "deputy" to the state superintendent.<sup>2</sup>

In 1843 the town commissioners and the town inspectors (trustees) were eliminated and the town superintendent's position created. Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee noted that for a brief period the town superintendent and the deputy superintendent (county level) both served intermediate functions. Soon, however, the deputy superintendent was eliminated from the picture, and the town superintendent remained as the sole official performing intermediate-type educational duties.<sup>3</sup>

The town superintendency was discontinued in 1856 and a new statute made provision for an elected county superintendent. This arrangement prevailed until 1910 when the elected county superintendency

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Dr. William J. Emerson, Superintendent, Oakland Schools Intermediate Administrative Unit, Pontiac, Michigan, December, 1966.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

was abolished and supervisory districts, made up of a number of towns in each district, were formulated. Each supervisory district had a board of school directors responsible for the selection of a superintendent of schools. Legally, the superintendent seemed to be directly responsible to the state education commissioner.<sup>1</sup>

As is true in many states, New York in the past half century has experienced almost continuous reorganization of local school districts. When originally organized in 1910, there were 208 supervisory districts operating, each containing approximately 50 local school districts. By 1961, only 95 of the original 208 remained, and the number of local school districts had been reduced from 9,310 in 1930 to 1,081.<sup>2</sup> Although as an interim-step provision was made for boards of cooperative services composed of local board representatives, no significant new intermediate unit legislation was passed in New York until 1948.<sup>3</sup> This was the situation, despite the obvious changes in district structure at both the local and intermediate levels. The 1948 law ordered the intermediate-type district to provide vocational and technical education, education for the atypical child, attendance and pupil accounting services, bus operation and maintenance, and general transportation arrangements. Local districts were allowed to request these various services from the intermediate agency. In addition, optional agreements such as sharing of teachers, supervisory assistance, business management, cooperative purchasing, curriculum research, and testing centers were authorized.<sup>4</sup>

New York's 1948 legislation decreed that intermediate units, per se, could not be formed without a vote of the people within the area. The intermediate district was established as a taxing body, and it was clearly specified that state financial aid would be withdrawn two years after an intermediate unit was organized. Sensing the very real difficulties in legally establishing intermediate districts, authors of the bill added a specific provision which authorized the establishment of boards of co-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-113.

<sup>2</sup>Francis E. Griffin, "A Quarter Century of Redistricting," Bulletin to the Schools (Albany: University of the State of New York, State Education Department, April, 1962), pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Francis E. Griffin (An Address to Wisconsin's Annual Conference of Chief Administrators, Madison, Wisconsin, September, 1965).

operative educational services as interim agencies, pending the formation of intermediate districts.<sup>1</sup>

Following the strict definition of intermediate unit as used in this study, such districts have not been organized in New York state. Co-operative boards can be established by a simple majority vote of local school board members, after authorization by the state commissioner of education. This has proved to be a very simple procedure when compared to the complicated processes required for the establishment of a true intermediate district. Thus, boards of cooperative educational services have blanketed the state.<sup>2</sup>

As an example of the cooperative boards' prominence in New York state, it can be noted that 70 of these boards received fourteen million dollars in state aid in 1965. In addition to state funds, considerable income was also derived from local school districts with whom the boards of cooperative educational services employed a total of 2,500 teachers, directors, supervisors, and program managers. Griffin emphasized, however, that serious problems have existed in these arrangements. Specifically, he cited lack of authority for the co-operative boards to levy taxes and own real property.<sup>3</sup>

Because of the problems inherent in New York's cooperative services arrangements, new legislation has been considered. In 1965 and again in 1967 it was suggested that 45 centers of cooperative educational services be established. Provisions were included for site acquisition, purchase of real property, and construction or rehabilitation of buildings, subject to approval of the area's qualified voters. The new centers would absorb boards of cooperative educational services and would contract with local schools, community colleges, and industry for various facilities and services. Financial aid for the new centers would be distributed on an equalization basis.<sup>4</sup>

The State Department of Education also proposed five regional centers for educational planning and development. These centers were to be directly responsible to the state education agency with financing from federal, state and private sources. It was anticipated that as

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-18.

<sup>4</sup>Area Centers of Cooperative Educational Services (Albany: The University of the State of New York, State Education Department, March, 1965).

problems were identified, regional center staff members would act as "catalytic and coordinative agents" in the utilization of the region's resources for the solution of problems.<sup>1</sup> The entire proposed legislation, popularly known as the "ACCES Bill," was passed by the legislature in 1965, but was vetoed by the governor. It is currently under consideration in the 1967 session.

### Wisconsin

The office of county superintendent was created in Wisconsin in 1861. It was established for the stated purposes of "overseeing public schools in the county and of reporting on the condition of local schools to the State Department of Public Instruction."<sup>2</sup> The position was elective, and no professional or technical qualifications were specified. As a result of strong criticisms of the county superintendent's poor qualifications, the legislature, in 1892, made an abortive attempt to abolish the office of county superintendent and provide for state inspectors of schools.<sup>3</sup>

In 1895 the Wisconsin legislature passed the first of several laws designed to increase professional qualifications of county superintendents. This statute required the superintendent to have had at least eight months of teaching experience and to hold a teacher's license. Apparently, however, the professional status of the county education officer was not materially increased, and no significant additional steps were taken until 1951. In that year the legislature required that county superintendents of schools (1) must have had at least two years of teaching experience in rural or "graded" schools, (2) must hold a college or university degree, and (3) must hold a lifetime teaching certificate.<sup>4</sup>

The county educational unit was under intensive study in Wisconsin during the fifteen year period from 1950-1965. The county office had taxing power and responsibilities for inspection and supervision, but it offered very few services to the local school districts.

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<sup>1</sup>Proposed Regional Centers for Educational Planning and Development in New York State (Albany: The University of the State of New York, State Education Department, March, 1965).

<sup>2</sup>Russell T. Gregg and George E. Watson, The County Superintendency in Wisconsin (Madison: The School of Education, University of Wisconsin, 1957), p. 204.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 204-205.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 205.



During the 1963 session of the Wisconsin legislature a significant law was passed calling for an eighteen-member committee with responsibility to create not more than twenty-five adequate service areas. The broadly representative committee was required, by December, 1964, to develop and publish a plan incorporating all the state into cooperative educational service agencies and to facilitate the initiation of the various functions after March 1, 1965.<sup>1</sup>

Nineteen regional service agencies were established on July 1, 1965, and the county superintendency was discontinued. The service agency board of control consists of not more than eleven members elected from among the board members in each of the constituent school districts. If there are more than eleven school districts in the service area, the state superintendent is required to call an annual convention of the local school district board members for the purpose of electing members to the board of control.<sup>2</sup>

The service agency board has no power to levy taxes, and state aid was initially limited to \$22,000 annually, but later increased to \$29,000.<sup>3</sup> The board is allowed to enter into contractual agreements with local school districts, county boards of supervisors, and other cooperative educational service agencies for various programs and services. The chief administrator, appointed by the board for a term not to exceed three years, is known as the agency coordinator. He must hold certification equal to that of local school administrators, and his salary must fall within the \$10,500 to \$13,500 range. A professional advisory committee, consisting of the chief administrator of each district within the service agency, works with the board of control and the agency coordinator.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Administrative Handbook, Cooperative Educational Services Agency (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1965), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>3</sup>Hoffman, op.cit., pp. 39-40.

<sup>4</sup>Administrative Handbook, op. cit., pp. 31-43.



## California

In California, the oldest form of intermediate unit, the office of county superintendent, has been and continues to be, very important. California has, in fact, been credited with the development of the most comprehensive program of services at the county level in the nation.<sup>1</sup>

The first mention of a county system of education in California was in 1852 when a Common School Act added three new administrative units to the state's school structure:

1. A state board of education made up of the governor, the state superintendent of public instruction, and the State Surveyor.
2. A common school marshall for each town, city and village who was responsible for taking the census of school-age children.
3. A county superintendent of common schools.<sup>2</sup>

Hoffman indicated that the county superintendent was required:

...to exercise general supervision over the schools in his county; to distribute forms, laws and instructions provided by the state superintendent of public instruction; to draw warrants on the county treasury in favor of creditors of the common schools; to appoint commissioners of the common schools in case vacancies occurred; to keep accurate reports in his office of the school marshalls and school commissioner; and to make an annual report to the state superintendent of public instruction.<sup>3</sup>

No compensation was provided for the county superintendent, however. Consequently, there were no applicants, and legislation was passed in 1853 requiring the county assessor to assume the duties of superintendent of the common schools. The county superintendency was specifically written into the law in 1856 with provision that the superintendent should

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Dr. Robert N. Isenberg, Washington, D.C., September, 1966.

<sup>2</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

be popularly elected in each county for a term of two years. Salary was to be set and paid by the supervisors in each county. In 1872 it was stipulated that a person was not eligible for the office of county superintendent if he was not a professional teacher holding a first-grade certificate. This provision was repealed two years later.<sup>1</sup>

The county superintendent in California became a constitutional officer in 1879. The constitutional provision stated that:

A superintendent of schools for each county shall be elected by the qualified voters thereof at the first gubernatorial election and every four years thereafter: provided, that the legislature may authorize two or more counties to unite and elect one superintendent for all the counties so uniting.<sup>2</sup>

This section of the constitution has remained unchanged in California, a state in which much of the public education has its base in the lengthy State Constitution.

Hoffman described the duties of the county superintendent by 1881 as administrative, clerical, and fiscal. He felt that his role as an instructional and curricular leader had not yet developed, and the superintendent was viewed basically as an arm of the state to assure an educational program in all towns, villages, and cities. He noted, also, that as the years passed, the role of the county superintendent was perceived as more concerned with and responsible for the smaller local school districts. In the cities, the city board of trustees and board of examination assumed some of the county superintendent's functions.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1879 and 1921 the county education office was granted additional administrative and regulatory power, but few basic changes occurred. The establishment of the emergency and supervision fund in 1921 could be termed a major change, however. Legislation allowed the California County Superintendent to employ qualified personnel to supervise teachers in local districts enrolling less than 300 students, and employ teachers when emergencies arose. It appears that this was the beginning

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 58-59.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

of the concept of "service" from the county office in California. Hoffman further suggested that the first indication of cooperation among and between counties began about 1921. County superintendents joined forces to hold institutes for teachers in various parts of the state.<sup>1</sup>

The responsibilities of the county superintendent's office were increased in 1929. In 1931 the emergency and supervision fund was replaced by three new funds. Included were an unapportioned county elementary fund, an unapportioned county high school fund and a county elementary supervision fund. As originally provided, these funds were derived from both local and state sources, but a 1933 amendment changed the basis to 100 per cent from state monies. These funds were used to provide the many needed educational services authorized by state statutes.<sup>2</sup>

An extremely significant County School Service Fund was enacted into law by the 1947 legislature. This fund tripled in one year the amount of operating monies available to county superintendents. Other 1947 legislation required the county superintendents to hold California certification credentials appropriate to the size of the specific county. Most of the California county superintendents by that time were professional educators. Those who did not meet the requirements were allowed to remain in office until they were defeated in an election or voluntarily decided to retire.<sup>3</sup>

According to Hoffman, between 1947 and 1955, few restrictions existed in the ways in which revenues were used by county offices. Thus, the amount and quality of services provided varied from county to county. After much study it was concluded that there was great duplication of effort. Therefore, legislation passed in 1955 stipulated that services must be cooperatively provided by two or more county offices whenever it was possible to do so with economy and effectiveness. The 1955 legislature also mandated an elected county board of education, and eliminated the professional advisory board.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-64.

<sup>3</sup>Isenberg Interview, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 65-68.

Recognizing the need for a system to reduce duplication of effort in the publication of curriculum materials in California's 58 counties, the Association of California County Superintendents formed a permanent Publications Committee in 1957. The concept was expanded in 1959 when a statewide Steering Committee of assistant county superintendents was created to devise means for inter-county cooperation. Hoffman stated that many cooperative projects have since developed in California. He observed that from 1961 through 1965, 94 cooperative activities were initiated throughout California. He attributed the increase to accelerated activities of the Steering Committee and many regional meetings held to discuss and plan common programs.<sup>1</sup>

### Pennsylvania

The early development of the county or intermediate unit in Pennsylvania followed a course similar to that noted in some Midwestern states. One basic difference is obvious, however.

Impetus for public education in Pennsylvania came from the Act of 1834. There was reluctant acceptance of the concept of free education, however, and it was necessary for the Act of 1834 to survive a repeal attempt just one year after its passage. A total of 531 local school districts had already been formed by 1854 when the legislature created the county superintendency to coordinate and lead local school districts. Thus, the line of administration, as conceived in 1854, followed the somewhat typical state-county-local, three-echelon pattern. It has been suggested that this relationship seemed to develop because of:

1. The existence of many small school districts and the need to decentralize the administration of these districts from the state to some middle agency,
2. The difficulty in communicating state educational policies because of poor roads, lack of mass transportation facilities, and undeveloped rapid communication devices, and
3. The lack of well qualified teachers and administrators to implement state education policies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-74, 83-84.

<sup>2</sup>Pennsylvania State Board of Education, An Intermediate Unit for Pennsylvania (Harrisburg: State Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, January, 1967), p. 1.



As Pennsylvania's state education system gradually matured, better qualified teachers and administrators became available and local districts started to merge into larger administrative units. Communications also began to improve and it was at this point that Pennsylvania partially deviated from the more traditional developmental pattern. Cognizant of the many and rapid changes in education, the General Assembly permitted some local school districts to work directly with the Department of Public Instruction. It was in this manner that Pennsylvania's structure developed almost concurrently as both a three-echelon and a two-echelon system of educational administration.<sup>1</sup> It therefore appears, that the intermediate unit's posture of programs and services was not so obvious in Pennsylvania until much later in the 20th Century.

Important attempts to change the structure of the county office of education were made in 1956 and 1965. Neither attempt was successful, but there has been continuous interest in bringing about change. In 1965, House Bill No. 737 proposed that the state board of education formulate and adopt a state plan for placing all local school districts in intermediate units. Under terms of the proposed legislation, all records, files, assets, and liabilities of county boards of education would eventually be transferred to the intermediate boards.<sup>2</sup>

Although the intermediate bill did not pass the General Assembly, the State Board of Education did adopt a "State Plan of Intermediate Units," as directed by the Act of December 1, 1965 (Appropriation Act 83-A). Legislation now under consideration in the 1967 session is needed to implement the Plan.<sup>3</sup>

Even in the absence of specific legal mandate, another modification of the intermediate unit concept has developed. Utilizing funds from the National Defense Education Act, Pennsylvania, since 1958, has formed eighteen instructional materials centers. These centers, located at the state colleges, have been partially staffed by reassigned state employees who formerly worked out of the county offices of education. It appears

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Pennsylvania State Board of Education, op. cit., p. 3.



that in addition to having aspects of both two-echelon and three-echelon organizational patterns, Pennsylvania has two sets of intermediate-type agencies. One set is the traditional county education office while the other set is composed of eighteen regional service centers.<sup>1</sup>

### Iowa

Iowa provides an excellent example of the development of the office of county superintendent in a Midwestern state which has been pre-dominately rural. Iowa's county superintendency was created by an 1858 act of the legislature. As originally structured, the role of the county superintendent was similar to that noted in other Midwestern states. The office was considered to be the educational leader and general supervisory officer of the many small districts not operating high schools.<sup>2</sup> In these Midwestern states, it was not uncommon for individual counties to have in excess of 50 one-teacher schools and 75 to 100 separate basic units of school administration. Therefore, an educational officer serving a regulatory function was deemed vitally necessary. Briefly stated, "the idea of a professional school administrator for each local school district had not yet emerged, and it was this role that was assumed by the intermediate or county superintendent."<sup>3</sup>

From 1913 to 1920, Iowa experienced its first strong movement for consolidation of local school districts. Little additional progress was evident until 1945. In that year, the legislature strengthened the reorganization laws, and a drive toward general educational improvement was underway in several parts of the state. As school district consolidation and reorganization was taking place, there was very little advance in adjusting county education office functions to the emerging district structure.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert M. Isenberg, Effective Intermediate School Districts (An address to beginning superintendents of schools, Albany, N.Y., June, 1964), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>The Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, Effective Intermediate Units in Iowa (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1960), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

As educational conditions changed in Iowa, there were several concerted efforts to abolish the county superintendency. Such efforts did not succeed, but the intermediate agency was indeed slow to react to the changing local district pattern. Apparently, the obvious interrelationships, as described by Isenberg, were not considered in this phase of intermediate development in Iowa:

...the interrelationships of autonomous local school districts, intermediate units, and the state education department are such that any major changes which take place at one point in the structure compel adjustments at the others...<sup>1</sup>

A new role for the county superintendent was recognized, to some degree, in 1948 in the form of new legislation. An elected county board of education and an appointive county superintendent were provided, and the law was permissive in allowing county offices to furnish requested educational programs and services to local school districts. Two or more county systems could provide services cooperatively, and two or more county systems could employ one superintendent to serve a multiple area. The superintendent was required to meet separately with each county board. Thus, it was recognized through legislative action, that the broadened county school system should expand its programs and services. Evidently, the restructured county unit was viewed as the instrumentality for preserving local autonomy while hopefully becoming the means for making comprehensive and adequate educational programs available to all children.<sup>2</sup>

Reduction of the number of school districts through reorganization again became an active issue in Iowa in about 1954. Since that time, there has been a steady decline in the number of local school districts. Because some counties have as few as one or two basic administrative units, the county in Iowa is regarded by some as an inadequate geographic base for an intermediate educational agency.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert M. Isenberg (ed), The Community School and the Intermediate Unit, A yearbook prepared by the Department of Rural Education (Washington: National Education Association, 1954), p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>The Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, op. cit., pp. 1-3.

<sup>3</sup>Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, loc. cit.

In 1957 at the request of the Iowa Association of County Superintendents, a research committee was organized to study and evaluate Iowa's county school system and make recommendations for the future development of the unit. The committee report called for a regional approach to provide broadened intermediate units of adequate size. It was recommended that a commission of five members be appointed by the State Board of Public Instruction to divide Iowa into 25 to 35 intermediate units, meeting the following criteria:

1. Minimum public school enrollment of 10,000.
2. Minimum of six and maximum of fifteen defensible local school districts.
3. A large (1,600 to 4,000) square mile socio economic or "tertiary" or multiple community area with a possible center in a small or large city. Said city to represent to a sizable extent a focal point of concentration of the main roads and highways; and be located not more than an approximate 40 miles radius from the outlying town or village centers.
4. Minimum assessed valuation of taxable property of \$90,000,000 and no less than \$6,500 assessed valuation of taxable property per pupil.
5. The boundaries of the intermediate unit should be drawn so that no local district will have territory in more than one intermediate unit.<sup>1</sup>

The basic concepts set forth in the report of the research committee were presented to the 1961 Iowa General Assembly in a proposed bill. No action was taken on the proposal.

In 1961 the Iowa Association of County Superintendents was again instrumental in bringing about further consideration of the intermediate unit structure. The Department of Public Instruction was, at that time, preparing a plan for a statewide system of area vocational-technical and community colleges. Requests for intermediate and area school legislation were combined and presented to the Sixtieth General Assembly. The rationale for combining the two proposals was that both needs could best be met through the establishment of a taxing district, a governing board and the appointment of a chief administrative officer. Therefore, it was decided that an attempt should be made to formulate areas for intermediate services and vocational-technical and community colleges that would be one and the same. This concept, however, was not

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<sup>1</sup>The Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

realized, as the proposed legislation failed to pass.<sup>1</sup>

Another proposal for the establishment of regional intermediate districts was introduced in the 1963 legislature, but this measure also failed.<sup>2</sup> Then, in 1965, significant legislation was passed, although the requested system of intermediate units was not mandated. As amended, House File 553 was approved and provided that (1) two or more adjacent counties may form a merged county school system, (2) the merged district shall have a single tax base, (3) a joint seven-member board of education shall act as the governing body, (4) the joint board shall have the authority to lease or rent office facilities, (5) the joint board shall have the authority to appoint advisory committees, (6) the joint board, with the approval of the State Board of Public Instruction, shall be authorized to provide courses and services for physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped children, to provide special and remedial courses and services, educational television, vocational rehabilitation training centers, and workshops, to lease, acquire, maintain, and operate such facilities and buildings as necessary to provide authorized courses and services, and to administer authorized programs, (7) the joint board shall be authorized to make application for, accept, and spend state and federal funds, and (8) an election may be held in adjacent counties on the proposition of merging the counties into a single school system.<sup>3</sup>

Senate File 550 was also enacted by the 1965 legislature. This law permitted the establishment of not more than twenty area vocational-technical and community colleges.<sup>4</sup> Fifteen areas were organized by 1967. There is, however, no direct connection between these fifteen areas and the intermediate structure, except that county unit mergers according to policy of the State Board of Public Instruction, must be within the framework of the area vocational-technical, community college boundaries.

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<sup>1</sup>Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, op. cit., p. 51, pp. 59-61.

<sup>2</sup>A Brochure published by the Iowa Association of County Superintendents (undated).

<sup>3</sup>House File No. 553, 61st General Assembly of the State of Iowa, 1965, pp. 2-7.

<sup>4</sup>Senate File No. 550, 61st General Assembly of the State of Iowa, 1965.



## Summary

Cooper and Fitzwater are among the many scholars who have examined the evolution of the intermediate unit. They have observed that:

1. During its early development, the intermediate unit was seen primarily as an extension of the arm of the state
2. There has been a gradual transfer of intermediate agency responsibilities from a lay board to a professional or at least a semi-professional chief administrative officer
3. Progress has been slow in expanding the role of the intermediate unit, because people naturally resist what are perceived as encroachments upon local control of education
4. The intermediate unit has gradually come to be viewed by many individuals as an agency to provide small local school districts with services which they cannot ordinarily provide for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

It can also be observed that intermediate units are changing, although very slowly, and have gradually evolved from regulatory and supervisory agencies to a posture of services and programs. The limited one-county concept of the intermediate unit is rooted deeply in America's educational traditions. Therefore, it is natural that changes in this basic concept should evolve in an extremely slow and sometimes difficult manner. Consideration of the literature as related to the development of the intermediate unit in several states does indicate, however, that changing conditions have brought significant changes at the middle-echelon level of the state-intermediate-local educational structure.

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<sup>1</sup>Cooper and Fitzwater, op. cit., pp. 108-109.



## II. NATIONAL STATUS OF THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT

In Chapter I, the intermediate unit was defined as the middle echelon of a three-echelon state system of education. As such, it serves intermediary functions between the state education department and the local districts, the two other major echelons of the state system. The middle agency is also seen as providing consultative, advisory, and educational program services to the local school districts. Viewed in this context, the intermediate unit is considered primarily as a multi-county regional educational service agency. It is recognized, however, that many intermediate units are coterminous with the boundaries of a single county. These one-county agencies will be referred to as county intermediate units.

### Three-Echelon Philosophy

McLure reported conflicting philosophies in regard to the existence of a middle-echelon agency in the state educational system. He stated:

For 50 years or so men have had different ideas as to the nature of organization and function of the intermediate administrative district. . . There have been two major opposing views, one to have it and one not to have it. Those favoring the former view have preferred a local district with a student population large enough to justify personnel for all services except the ones provided by the state central office. For most rural areas and small villages this requires a multi-community area. The county-unit system is an example, although such an area as this need not coincide with county boundaries. Persons favoring the intermediate district envisage a local district with a small student population, predominantly of the one-community type.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McLure, op.cit., p. 14.

From a review of literature up to 1956, the same writer noted several general ideas permeating the literary treatments:

1. Distinctive change becomes readily apparent. Included are changes in the lives of people, in the kinds of schools they want and need, and in the type of organization necessary for operating those schools.

2. Men have struggled to understand the nature and direction of needed educational change.

3. There is an obvious absence of planning in respect to the kind of organization needed to facilitate the accomplishment of educational objectives. This condition is more characteristic of the early local school districts which just "grew up." It is, however, also descriptive of the intermediate districts, because they were organized on a county basis in most states without consideration of special advantages in the administration of schools. This organizational form was primarily due to the fact that the county unit of government already existed.

4. Some writers have persisted in the view that the county superintendent's office has proved to be a position of leadership in rural education. These authors have usually been supporters of the office and have presented two messages. One encourages the professional staff and the public to unite around the superintendent's leadership, while the other exhorts the leader to new heights of performance. The more recent intermediate-unit advocates have emphasized the potential for this leadership to serve as liaison between rural and urban communities.

5. The literature reveals many similarities and conflicts in writers' opinions concerning the professional and legal status of the intermediate superintendency.<sup>1</sup>

Another writer also stressed the point that the intermediate unit was created to overcome some of the shortcomings in local district administrative units. Knezevich observed that the early functions of the office were administrative, statistical, and supervisory with the service concept of the intermediate unit being developed at a much later date.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1962), p. 153.

Evidence that the place and functions of the intermediate unit still must be determined in many states was cited by Morphet, Johns, and Reller.<sup>1</sup> Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee commented on the general confusion over the proper place and function of the intermediate unit. Despite this confusion, these authors felt that some agencies of this type have demonstrated significant progress, especially in metropolitan areas.<sup>2</sup> Emerson, in turn, indicated that during this period of confusion when local districts have been attempting to reorganize into larger administrative units, three types of development have been apparent. In some Southern states all local districts were abolished, and the county school district became the operating unit. In some Midwestern and Western states the county or intermediate office has diminished in importance. In many states with metropolitan areas the county school district has begun to perform specialized functions on behalf of the local school districts.<sup>3</sup> The intermediate development in metropolitan areas, as described by Emerson, was similar to the observations of Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee.<sup>4</sup>

Isenberg suggested that a new type of intermediate unit is evolving, and this middle-echelon agency must be considered as part of the total state educational system. He called attention to the interrelationships between the various levels whether the total system follows a three-echelon or a two-echelon pattern. He stated that the entire system is a delicate balance of relationship, "and when we tinker with one segment of it, all the other levels are affected."<sup>5</sup> As had McLure ten years

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<sup>1</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., p. 280.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, McPhee, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>William J. Emerson, "The Intermediate School District--Middle Echelon of a Three-Echelon State System of Schools, "a paper presented to the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Arcata, California, August, 1965, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Robert M. Isenberg, "The Evolving Intermediate Unit," an address quoted from Proceedings of Conference on School District Reorganization and the Intermediate Service Unit, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April, 1966, p. 21, pp. 26-27.

earlier,<sup>1</sup> Isenberg despaired of the lack of overall planning to facilitate an organization conducive to the accomplishment of educational objectives. In this regard he was particularly critical of the tendency to look at only one level at a time to the exclusion of consideration of the total state system of schools.<sup>2</sup> He noted the mutually reinforcing qualities of the various organizational echelons and said: "What each one does depends on what the others do. And none can be considered in isolation without taking fully into account the structure and the functioning of the other levels."<sup>3</sup>

Isenberg clearly disagreed with earlier writers in his insistence that intermediate services should not substitute for adequate local school districts. He reemphasized the interrelationships by pointing out that "within the structure, the objective is to make every level of the state system strong."<sup>4</sup>

Other students of the intermediate unit have agreed that the various echelons of the total state system of education are interrelated. In addition to emphasizing that the intermediate unit is not a substitute for local school districts, stress has also been placed upon the fact that local districts should not be seen as subordinates of the intermediate agency. The "equal partnership concept" for all echelons has been advocated, and it has been noted that the intermediate unit will function best when local districts are strong. These writers were also of the opinion that effective intermediate units should strengthen local school districts.<sup>5</sup> The danger that a broad range of intermediate programs and services could deter local school district reorganization and thus perpetuate small and inadequate administrative units has been acknowledged in the literature.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McLure, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Isenberg, Conference Proceedings, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>Isenberg, Conference Proceedings, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>5</sup>The Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>6</sup>Isenberg, loc. cit.



This danger, or potential danger, will receive more detailed treatment in a later section of this chapter.

### Organizational Patterns

Concern about the county or intermediate office has been evident in the literature since the turn of the century. Cubberley, one of the most prolific writers of the Twentieth Century, expressed concern and regarded the office as a position of leadership in rural education. He observed that during the first two decades of this century marked changes occurred in the general conditions surrounding the office. According to Cubberley, it was a period of extremely significant change in expenditures, enrollments, and educational philosophy. The way of life for rural people was altered by income and transportation changes, shifting of community lives, and growth in many rural-related organizations. He sensed a need for a new type of leadership and felt that intermediate agencies must undergo fundamental structural changes in order to meet the new needs. Cubberley believed that the emerging leadership should be supervisory in nature and that various intermediate services could be made available to the smaller local school districts.<sup>1</sup>

More recent writers have indicated that the intermediate unit is on trial and probably has always been on trial. They noted that it may be "that any unit which attempts to find a place between the legally fixed responsibility for education at the state level and the jealously guarded operation of schools at the local district level is inevitably in trouble."<sup>2</sup> Despite the inherent problems, the three-echelon pattern has predominated in the United States. In 1965 it was reported that 32 states tended to incorporate aspects of the three-echelon pattern in the state structure for education; seventeen were classified as two-echelon states; and one (Hawaii) was considered as following a one-echelon pattern, because the entire state is included in one school district. From an examination of Table 1, it can be seen that some provision for an intermediate agency between the state and local levels remains the primary administrative

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<sup>1</sup>Elwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, Revised Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922).

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 116.



organizational form.<sup>1</sup> In interpreting Table 1 it should be understood that some states (particularly in New England) exhibit characteristics of both two-echelon and three-echelon operational patterns. They have been classified in accordance with the probable degree of major emphasis or predominate pattern.

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<sup>1</sup>Project Staff, "Evolving Patterns of School District Organization in the United States," Preliminary Report II, A Master Plan for School District Organization in Ohio (Columbus, Ohio: The State Department of Education, 1966), p. 26.

TABLE 1

STATE SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION:  
ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS 1965

One-Echelon (1)	Two-Echelon (2)	Three-Echelon (3)
Hawaii	Alabama Alaska Delaware Florida Georgia Idaho Kentucky Louisiana Maryland Nevada New Mexico North Carolina Rhode Island Tennessee Utah Virginia West Virginia	Arizona Arkansas California Colorado Connecticut Illinois Indiana Iowa Kansas Maine Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Mississippi Missouri Montana Nebraska New Hampshire New Jersey New York North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma Oregon Pennsylvania South Carolina South Dakota Texas Vermont Washington Wisconsin Wyoming
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL (50 States)		
<u>One-Echelon System</u> 2%	<u>Two-Echelon System</u> 34%	<u>Three-Echelon System</u> 64%

There appears to be a slight trend toward the organization of areas which are not coterminous with county boundaries.<sup>1</sup> It appears, however, that states generally retain the two-echelon or three-echelon systems under which they have historically operated. Writers have indicated, however, that exceptions can be noted in that West Virginia, Nevada, and New Mexico have changed from a three-echelon to a two-echelon system.<sup>2</sup> Others, including Isenberg, add Delaware and Idaho to the list. Isenberg also observed that the intermediate form of school administration is going rapidly out of the picture in Missouri, Colorado, Arkansas, and Texas. He indicated, further that "there are some other states where what exists as an intermediate agency is hardly defensible."<sup>3</sup>

Hoffman tended to believe that Wyoming and Minnesota should be numbered among the states in which the intermediate office was gradually passing from the scene. He noted that the Wyoming legislature, in 1957, made it possible to eliminate the office of county superintendent by vote of the people. Although by 1965 only three counties had taken such action, he felt that many more would soon follow.<sup>4</sup>

Recent legislation in Minnesota was also mentioned by Hoffman. In 1965 county commissioners were permitted to terminate the county office of education, if twelve or less school districts exist in the county. He reported that 44 of Minnesota's 87 counties had abolished the office by 1965.<sup>5</sup>

#### County-Unit Local School District

Most of the states described as having the two-echelon organizational pattern have local school districts which encompass broad geographic areas. In several of these states local district and county boundary lines are

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<sup>1</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., p. 280.

<sup>2</sup>Ohio Project Staff, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Isenberg, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>4</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-18.

identical. A recent study listed fifteen states with local districts covering large areas, often roughly coinciding with political counties. Included were Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia.<sup>1</sup> Hoffman added another state to the list, contending that California with five county-wide local districts joins Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas as states employing both county-unit and county-intermediate systems. He noted that four states, namely, Florida, New Mexico, Nevada and West Virginia, are organized into county-wide local districts, while eight other states have a few districts that are not county-wide.<sup>2</sup>

Hoffman pointed out that although most states included in the county-wide district classification have no intermediate units, they have county superintendents of schools. In such situations the county superintendent has full administrative responsibility for the county-unit local school district. The county superintendent and the district superintendent are thus one and the same. He called specific attention to the fact that such is the case in several Southern states.<sup>3</sup>

Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee concluded that the county still composes the unit in most of the states having an intermediate agency.<sup>4</sup> Other writers suggested the absence of any trend for two-echelon states to move toward a three-echelon system. They noted, instead, modifications of existing structures representing an evolving pattern of school district organization.<sup>5</sup> As previously mentioned, Morphet, Johns, and Reller recognized what they interpreted as a tendency for organizational patterns to move away from the structural confines of county-coterminous areas.<sup>6</sup> Some aspects of these trends and developments were illustrated

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<sup>1</sup>The Task Force on Education, Education for the Future of Illinois (Springfield: State of Illinois, December, 1966), p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>5</sup>Ohio Project Staff, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>6</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, loc. cit.

by Hoffman in his classification of state system organizational patterns. The Hoffman classification differs from the scheme employed in Table 1.

Hoffman categorized Connecticut as a state in which no intermediate units are really operative while other descriptions have considered Connecticut as a three-echelon state. In Hoffman's view a direct line of authority exists between the state and Connecticut's local districts. A supervisory union superintendent is listed in the U.S. Office of Education Directory, but no intermediate educational officer, as such, is present. In effect, the state board of education employs superintendents and assigns them to certain communities which do not provide their own administrator.<sup>1</sup>

The divisions in Hoffman's grouping are more detailed than in other classificatory systems. Thus, multiple patterns exhibited within one state can be shown. It is possible to indicate whether or not a state has an intermediate structure and county-unit local school districts can be illustrated. For three-echelon states, the type of intermediate agency, that is, county office, supervisory union, or broader area, can also be demonstrated. In original form, the taxonomy also included provision for related information as to constitutional requirements, changes, and current organizational studies.<sup>2</sup>

A modified, abbreviated version of the Hoffman classification is presented in Table 2. Presence or absence of the middle-echelon in each of the 50 states is shown as is the form of intermediate unit and county or large geographic area local school district.

According to Table 2, nineteen states have no intermediate agency while seventeen states, including fourteen classified as non-intermediate unit states, have some local school districts organized along county lines. Twenty-four states have county-coterminous intermediate units, but four are converting to regional units. Five states, including Connecticut for purposes of this classification, have supervisory unions, and seven states have organized new area units.

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<sup>1</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 53-55.



TABLE 2

1965 STATE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM PATTERNS AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES -- A MODIFICATION  
OF THE HOFFMAN TYPOLOGY

State	No Intermediate Agency		Intermediate Agency		
	None	County Unit Local Districts	County Office	Super- visory Union	New Area Units
Alabama	X	X			
Alaska	X				
Arizona			X		
Arkansas			X		
California		X	X		
Colorado			X		X
Connecticut	X			X	
Delaware	X				
Florida	X	X			
Georgia	X	X			
Hawaii	X				
Idaho	X				
Illinois			X		
Indiana			X		
Iowa			X		X
Kansas			X		
Kentucky	X	X			
Louisiana	X	X			
Maine				X	
Maryland	X	X			
Massachusetts				X	
Michigan					X
Minnesota			X		
Mississippi		X	X		
Missouri			X		
Montana			X		
Nebraska			X		X
Nevada	X	X			
New Hampshire				X	
New Jersey			X		

TABLE 2 (Continued)

State	No Intermediate Agency		Intermediate Agency		
	None	County Unit Local Districts	County Office	Super- visory Union	New Area Units
New Mexico	X	X			
New York					X
North Carolina	X	X			
North Dakota			X		
Ohio			X		
Oklahoma			X		
Oregon			X		
Pennsylvania			X		
Rhode Island	X				
South Carolina		X	X		
South Dakota			X		
Tennessee	X	X			
Texas		X	X		
Utah	X	X			
Vermont				X	
Virginia	X	X			
Washington			X		X
West Virginia	X	X			
Wisconsin					X
Wyoming			X		
TOTALS	19	17	24*	5**	7

\*Four states maintaining county offices of education had adopted a newer form of intermediate unit and were in the transitory process.

\*\*Connecticut is included in this category even though the supervisory union did not serve an intermediate function.

Reference to Table 1 and Table 2 illustrates the diversity of organizational patterns of state educational systems. Despite the variations, it can be seen that a majority of the states continue to include some type of intermediate-level agency in the overall state structure for education. The need for a middle echelon unit will be explored in the following section.

### III. THE NEED FOR THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT

It has been suggested that the intermediate unit is, has always been, and will continue to be on trial.<sup>1</sup> McLure observed that there have long been fundamental differences of opinion as to whether there should be an intermediate unit.<sup>2</sup> Van Miller was among the many writers who seriously questioned the necessity for a middle-echelon educational agency. He advocated the eventual abolishment of this middle unit, contingent upon drastic reduction of local school districts through continued reorganization. He believed that the intermediate unit could then pass from the scene because the larger local districts would provide most services. The need that still existed could be met through branch offices of state education departments, if not through more efficient communication systems with state offices, according to this view.<sup>3</sup>

It appears that Miller and other severe critics of the three-echelon structure have tended to equate "intermediate" with "county." Miller, in particular, tended not to envision the intermediate unit in a broader context than the single county. He stressed the idea of the county unit as intermediate between local and state levels and emphasized the more traditional liaison role of the county superintendent.<sup>4</sup> Other writers have been as critical but have called for significant change in the structure of the intermediate agency. They proposed the broadened regional or area service concept rather than total abolishment. Somewhat typical of this

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<sup>1</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>McLure, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Van Miller, The Public Administration of American School Systems (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1965), pp. 138-139.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-115.

group was Knezevich, who said "the office should not be abolished, but rather redesigned to perform a more vital role in educational administration."<sup>1</sup>

### Advantages and Disadvantages of the Intermediate Unit

The case for or against the intermediate unit has received considerable attention in the literature. The question of district structure and organizational patterns has been the subject of much study and research in the past few years. In 1965 it was reported that at least nineteen states were studying or had recently studied district organizational problems. These states were California, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> Also in 1965, Hoffman listed California, Illinois, Kansas, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin as currently studying the intermediate unit. Of even greater significance, he noted that thirteen states had made major changes in middle echelon organizations within the past twenty years. He pointed out, further, that Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin were operating what he termed "new intermediate units."<sup>3</sup>

Sabin concluded that intermediate units have been reorganized effectively in several states since 1948.<sup>4</sup> In 1966, Isenberg cited intermediate developments in nine states and suggested that a new type of intermediate unit is evolving in the United States. He indicated that Michigan now has the intermediate school district, and that the intermediate unit is developing in Iowa. Washington has formulated a state plan for intermediate agencies, while Wisconsin has organized cooperative educational service agencies. In Nebraska a new set of cooperative

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<sup>1</sup>Knezevich, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Oregon Association of Intermediate Education Districts and County District Superintendents, "Minimum Standards for Intermediate Education Districts," October, 1965.

<sup>3</sup>Hoffman, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Robert C. Sabin, "A Survey of the Need for an Intermediate School District in Oregon with Implications for Its Future Development" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, Eugene, 1965).

educational service units have been organized. Colorado has developed a type of cooperative services program. Significant studies are underway in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.<sup>1</sup>

Proponents of the intermediate form have cited the various research projects and tangible developments in many states as evidence that the intermediate unit is changing and is capable of adapting to new needs. There is, however, unanimity of agreement that the intermediate unit must continuously evolve if it is to develop the kinds of programs and services required.

Many authors have cited the multifarious change factors that have affected the intermediate unit. Reorganization of school districts into larger administrative units, consolidation of schools into larger attendance areas, more and better technological equipment, and improved communications were mentioned specifically as having done much to change the picture.<sup>2</sup> A distinctive change in public aspirations for education has also been noted as an important contributing factor.<sup>3</sup> Urbanization and major social and economic changes have also been included.<sup>4</sup>

Emerson, who noted the profound increase in educational aspirations, suggested that the principal public purposes supporting elementary and secondary education have undergone significant change. Therefore, the "common" high school is no longer adequate. Some readily identified imperatives must be considered in relation to the intermediate unit. He listed these imperatives:

1. Some children should receive more instructional attention than others in their K-12 careers.
2. Many children should receive different kinds of instructional attention than others...
3. Some children should receive highly specialized kinds of instructional attention...

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<sup>1</sup>Isenberg, Conference Proceedings, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup>The Task Force on Education, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Emerson Paper, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>McLure, op. cit., pp. 6-7.



4. Most children should receive instruction in the most recently developed subject matter taught in the most modern manner with the latest instructional materials.
5. All faculty members periodically and some faculty members continuously require developmental and technical help in their professional operations.
6. All school operations require systematic study and operational evaluation.
7. All school operations require access to efficient and economical data processing and business operations systems.
8. All state systems are being required to assure that these imperatives apply in some normative fashion across the geography of the state.<sup>1</sup>

Emerson's point was that typically our present organization echelons are no longer suitable for these imperatives. "Some adaptation, some re-configuration of structure and function is required."<sup>2</sup>

An Iowa study described a dual role for the intermediate unit. Included were assisting local districts to improve the scope and quality of education provided, and assisting the state education departments in the administration of the state system of schools.<sup>3</sup> In 1956, McLure listed similar functions,<sup>4</sup> while an earlier publication took a more traditional view with focus on leadership, specialized programs, and certain management services for small local districts.<sup>5</sup> Other writers have observed that the intermediate office has traditionally been charged with responsibilities for various legally prescribed functions. Evidence

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<sup>1</sup>Emerson Paper, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Id., p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>McLure, op. cit., pp. 1-28.

<sup>5</sup>The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States, op. cit., Chapter VI.

has led to the conclusion, however, that such functions have often been ignored or dispensed in minimal fashion.<sup>1</sup>

McHenry demonstrated that many of the older regulatory-legal functions had given way to the newer concepts of leadership from the intermediate agency.<sup>2</sup> McLure's comment was similar when he observed that intermediate office functions were "shifting from a line-oriented status to a staff-oriented status--that is, from directive to advisory."<sup>3</sup> He insisted that this changing orientation was brought about principally by school district reorganization. This view was shared by many writers who dealt with need and function in relation to the intermediate unit. These authors, including those discussed earlier, were joined in this view by those who wrote about changing conditions and resultant effects on the middle echelon agency. Although some looked no further than the county intermediate unit, most of the writers agreed that reorganization of local districts was the single most important factor to affect the intermediate organization. Therefore, the impact of changes in local school district structure is now considered.

#### District Reorganization and the Intermediate Unit

Earlier scholars, such as Cubberley<sup>4</sup> and Strayer,<sup>5</sup> tended to look at the county as the intermediate unit. As described by McLure, this county unit had its origin in a simple pioneer setting. The county

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<sup>1</sup>John S. Rinehart, "The Function, Organization, and Operation of the County School District in Ohio" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1957).

<sup>2</sup>Vere A. McHenry, "School District Reorganization in Utah" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 1965).

<sup>3</sup>McLure, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>4</sup>Cubberley, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>George D. Strayer, Centralizing Tendencies in the Administration of Public Education, Contributions to Education, No. 618 (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934).

superintendent's primary concern was with rural life and small rural schools and his function was somewhat unique in that he had the general oversight of many small and dispersed schools. Because public education was neither universal nor very broad in scope, its administration was relatively simple. The intermediate organization, conceived as an agency to oversee this type of educational system, could also be simple. Time has, however, completely altered this situation.<sup>1</sup> American public education became both universal and broad, and the one-room rural school gradually vanished.

Educational authorities since the first part of the Twentieth Century have recognized the need for drastic consolidation and reorganization of local school districts. However, noteworthy progress in the reduction of the number of local districts has been evident only in the past two decades.

Table 3 presents data concerning the number of local school districts in selected school years beginning with 1932-33, the first year in which reasonably complete information was assembled,<sup>2</sup> through the 1966-67 school year. Table 3 indicates that the 127,649 local districts listed nationally for the 1932-33 school year have gradually been reduced to a total of 23,335 in 1966-67. The rate of reduction was very slow through 1948-49, but has since accelerated. In 1948-49 there were 105,971 local administrative units, but by 1951-52 the number had declined to 70,933. Significant progress in district reorganization has continued through 1966-67.

The information utilized in the development of Table 3 was derived from several sources.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McLure, op. cit., pp. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., p. 267.

<sup>3</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., p. 267, Subcommittee of Committee for the White House Conference on Education, A Statistical Survey of School District Organization in the United States 1954-55 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, October, 1965), pp. 3-7, Knezevich, op. cit., pp. 144-145, Miller, op. cit., p. 145, McHenry, op. cit., p. 47, and John A. Spiess, "Community Power Structure and Influence: Relationships to Educational Administration" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1967), p. 1.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE UNITED STATES  
BY SELECTED SCHOOL YEARS, 1932-33 TO 1966-67

Year	Number
1932 - 33	127,649
1941 - 42	115,384
1942 - 43	108,579
1948 - 49	105,971
1951 - 52	70,933
1952 - 53	67,045
1955 - 56	59,648
1958 - 59	48,043
1960 - 61	42,457
1961 - 62	36,402
1962 - 63	34,678
1964 - 65	28,814
1965 - 66	26,800
1966 - 67	23,335

Table 3 shows a definite trend in the reduction of the number of local school districts. The rapid rate of reorganization and consolidation has been particularly significant in the past twenty years. Similar trends are apparent in many of the individual states.

Ohio and Iowa are representative of states in which the county intermediate unit has historically been important in the total educational system, and of states in which the potential of an expanded regional intermediate service agency is currently under serious study. The pattern of local school district reorganization in two states is briefly described for illustrative purposes.

District reorganization trends demonstrated nationally in Table 3 are reflected in the reduction of the number of local districts in Ohio and Iowa. Ohio, with a population almost five times that of Iowa and with 2,022 local units in 1930, has reorganized at a much slower pace than has Iowa with its proliferation of extremely small districts. Iowa's progress since 1954 has been distinctive. In that year the state had 4,417 school districts, and the corresponding figure at the beginning of the 1966-67 school year was 501. Ohio, in contrast, has moved at a somewhat slower tempo. The result has been a very gradual reduction to the 1966-67 total of 712.<sup>1</sup>

The very significant reduction in the total number of local school districts and the accompanying reorganization into larger local administrative units obviously has had much effect on the intermediate unit. Also of great significance to the middle echelon agency is the decline in the number of non-operating school districts and one-room rural schools. Knezevich noted that the number of non-operating districts declined during a ten-year period from 1948 to 1958 from 17,131 to 6,607.<sup>2</sup> Other statistics indicate a further reduction of 2,712 in the five year period from 1957 to 1962.<sup>3</sup> These non-operating districts have been described as bona fide governmental subdivisions which provide no educational

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<sup>1</sup>A Report by the Project Staff, A Master Plan for School District Organization in Ohio (Columbus, Ohio: The State Department of Education, December, 1966), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Knezevich, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>3</sup>Bureau of the Census, Public School Systems in the United States 1961-62 1962 Census of Governments (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 4.



programs.<sup>1</sup> Typically, they provide transportation and pay tuition for the education of children from their districts by other districts.<sup>2</sup>

The one-teacher rural school which flourished in earlier days is also rapidly disappearing from the American educational scene. A decline of 70 per cent in the 35 year period since 1932 was reported.<sup>3</sup>

Although great progress has been made in school district reorganization, it is to be emphasized that the task is far from complete. Morphet, Johns, and Reller noted that in 1966 more than 50 per cent of all school districts in the nation were in the Great Lakes and Plains areas. Nearly 60 per cent of all districts still enrolled fewer than 1,200 pupils, and almost 15 per cent operated no schools. The authors expressed the belief that more than three-fourths of all existing districts remain too small to be effective.<sup>4</sup> The necessity for eventually "reorganizing the reorganized" was also stressed:

Many of the reorganizations that have occurred in rural areas and some in suburban areas have been inadequate from a long-range point of view. Further reorganization involving new combinations of reorganized districts will be needed in many states.<sup>5</sup>

Most writers have agreed that an additional reduction in the total number of local administrative units is essential. It has been suggested that the number of local districts should eventually be reduced to 10,000.<sup>6</sup> The Ohio Project staff predicted that the total number of districts would eventually stabilize somewhere near this figure.<sup>7</sup> Morphet, Johns and Reller felt that 5,000 properly organized districts could more adequately meet the needs of education of society.<sup>8</sup> One writer recommended that

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<sup>1</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Miller, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>3</sup>Knezevich, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

<sup>4</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., pp. 267-268; p. 273.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>6</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>7</sup>A Report by the Project Staff, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>8</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., p. 268.

many districts be eliminated through the abolishment of local control. He charged that local control had already outlived its usefulness and must give way to a control system "in which local communities play ceremonial rather than policy-making roles."<sup>1</sup>

Miller agreed that most of the pressure in reorganization has been and should be exerted in the elimination of the very small school districts. Further, he voiced concern that population concentrations in metropolitan areas are leading to school districts that are too large. He described the city school system as a type of "city-state" and suggested sub-districting within the overall administrative framework for such exceptionally large districts.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Impact of Reorganization on the Intermediate Unit

Extensive reorganization and consolidation of local school districts has had a tremendous impact on the intermediate unit. Thus, the major question in examining the literature concerns the role and function of the middle agency in the three-level state system.

McHenry clearly described the profound effect of widespread reorganization on the intermediate unit. He stated:

Whereas the intermediate district superintendent and his staff formerly had a responsibility to provide leadership and service to a multitude of small districts in most cases, they suddenly found themselves dealing with a relatively small number of larger and more efficiently organized basic administrative units. Some of the services previously provided at the intermediate level could now be performed by the local district, thus bringing about an upward evolution of the intermediate unit which had to adopt new methods and offer expanded services in order to continue to function in the role for which it was originally created.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Myron Lieberman, The Future of Public Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Miller, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

<sup>3</sup>McHenry, loc. cit.

There is not complete agreement that the intermediate agency should expand so as to continue its original functions. This view is held particularly by those who view the intermediate district as a county intermediate unit. The Illinois Task Force commented that the county superintendent in that state has functioned as an intermediary between local districts and the office of state superintendent. They concluded that the county superintendent in Illinois was in effect an assistant to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The county office was thus considered as a vital link in the state's administrative structure for public schools. In this capacity, the office served as a clearinghouse for communication between the local and state levels, as a general coordinator for various activities, and as a public information office. The Illinois report noted that various developments, including reorganization of the local district structure which the county office was designed to serve, had indeed resulted in changed conditions. It was therefore concluded that the intermediate office as presently constituted is entirely outdated.<sup>1</sup>

Others have made similar comments, although taking a somewhat different look at the effects of local district reorganization. It was postulated that the intermediate agency's existence has often been justified on the basis of routine administrative services. According to this line of reasoning, middle echelon weaknesses are ignored due to the increased self-reliance of individual local districts.<sup>2</sup> McHenry believed, however, that the intermediate unit showed signs of keeping pace. He felt that traditional legal functions were giving way to new concepts of leadership. He contended that "... not only are essential pupil services extended but direction and coordination are provided with regard to the overall educational program."<sup>3</sup>

A California report contained a similar viewpoint. Attention was directed toward the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of educational leadership in that state. A clear need for some form of intermediate unit was emphasized. Serving as a focal point of interdistrict services and collaborations and as a vital link in the process of educational development in California were included as important functions for such an agency.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Task Force on Education, op. cit., pp. 174-175,

<sup>2</sup>Remaking the Educational Order: Educational Change and the Intermediate Unit (Santa Barbara: University of California at Santa Barbara, Center for Coordinated Education, 1965), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>McHenry, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur D. Little, Inc., Emerging Requirements for Effective Leadership for California Education (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, November 1964), p. 38, 49.

McLure, in 1956, identified a new concept emerging in the literature. He asserted that staunch advocates of the intermediate unit had apparently switched their emphasis. The proponents had begun emphasizing the intermediate office's opportunity to function as liaison between rural and urban communities. McLure felt this idea was highly significant in view of changes in the way of life in the last quarter century.<sup>1</sup>

Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee took a somewhat different position. They theorized that "in recent years, the intermediate unit has come to be viewed by many people as an agency to provide to small local districts services which they cannot ordinarily provide for themselves."<sup>2</sup> Although this is a traditional view of the place of the middle agency in the tri-level system, the authors supported their position by citing the continuing need for extensive reorganization of basic local administrative units. They also questioned the need for an intermediate agency once significant changes in local district structure had occurred. They observed that twenty-three states functioned without intermediate units and questioned why the other 27 could not do likewise. These writers asked whether intermediate unit functions which appeared necessary in rural America of a century ago still existed.<sup>3</sup>

Other writers have contended that an intermediate unit will probably always be needed in our educational system. Knezevich, for example, submitted that there would be justification for continued existence of the intermediate unit unless all local districts are structured to have a minimum of 10,000 enrolled pupils. He believed that the likelihood of ever achieving the minimum goal was indeed remote because population is too sparse in most states, and there is great concern for maintaining at least some semblance of a community district boundary. He suggested that school districts following county boundary lines would not alleviate the need for intermediary functions, because the number of pupils rather than geographic area should be the important factor. In support of this

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<sup>1</sup>McLure, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 114-116.



Knezevich used Iowa as an example. In 1960 about three-fourths of the counties in Iowa had total populations of less than 25,000. Over a third of Iowa counties had fewer than 15,000 people. Knezevich estimated that a population in excess of 40,000 would be needed to produce a public school enrollment of 10,000 pupils.<sup>1</sup>

As had various other authors, Knezevich recognized that changes at one level in the public school structure will of necessity have an impact on all others. He noted that local school district reorganization was such a structural change. He recognized the significant impact of reorganization and called for fundamental adaptation of the intermediate administrative unit to compensate for alterations in patterns at the local level. He insisted that the middle echelon agency would continue to be needed only if changes were made in its operation and structure.<sup>2</sup>

Knezevich's conception of the properly revitalized intermediate unit was consistent with Isenberg's vision of an intermediary agency which would assist local school districts in developing improved educational programs. It was thus implied that the intermediate unit of school administration should be primarily a service oriented agency with specific services determined by local needs and aspirations.<sup>3</sup>

Other writers stated that leaders in many states believe there will soon be no place for the intermediate unit. According to this reasoning, services that cannot be provided adequately by single school districts can be furnished through cooperative arrangements among local districts. Morphet, Johns, and Reller expressed doubts, however, wondering whether mutual agreements could work satisfactorily in the absence of an intermediate unit performing a coordinative function. Other authorities proposed that state education departments replace intermediate units by establishing regional service offices. Doubts about such a plan have also been expressed. Fears of increased state control and the possibility that regional state department offices would not really meet local needs have been cited.<sup>4</sup> Miller, one of the writers who advocated establishment

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<sup>1</sup>Knezevich, op. cit., pp. 158-159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Robert M. Isenberg, (ed), The Community School and the Intermediate Unit, op. cit., Chapter VII.

<sup>4</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., pp. 280-281.



of state education department branch offices, qualified his position, by stating that intermediate functions could be performed by state branch offices if the total number of local school districts is ever reduced to the 5,000 units some authorities recommend.<sup>1</sup>

One of the earliest systematic studies of the impact of school district reorganization upon the intermediate office was conducted by McLure. He concentrated on changes in the function of the intermediate agency that existed after the reorganization of local districts. For purposes of analysis, the job of the intermediate office was described in terms of 60 important administrative duties. These duties were classified into groups including (1) supervision, (2) business management, (3) clerical and statistical, (4) district reorganization, (5) communication, and (6) interpretation of education. County intermediate unit and local superintendents were interviewed in an effort to ascertain what changes in duties took place after local district reorganization.

It should be noted that McLure did not attempt to evaluate the quality of performance of these tasks. Mention should also be made of the fact that he considered only the more administratively oriented tasks. His original classification did not include the many additional program and service functions advocated for the intermediate unit by other writers.

The following conclusions about change in volume and kind of activity were reported from the study:

1. There was a reduced amount of activity or work commonly described as supervision of instruction. Those duties having an increased amount of work attached to them were new types of services which did not exist in large measure prior to reorganization.

2. There was little change in the volume of work on matters of a business nature. The nature of the work changed even more markedly than in the case of supervisory activities, however.

3. A definite decrease in the volume of clerical and statistical work was found. This decrease was attributed to consolidation of data and greater accuracy on the part of local officials.

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, op. cit., pp. 137-139.

4. A profound increase in the job of communicating with the local schools and the public in general was noted. Interpreting the schools to the public proved to be a major part of the communication function. This particular activity showed the most marked change both in nature and volume of work.<sup>1</sup>

Beem also studied the relationship of intermediate functions and district reorganization in Michigan. He reported that the majority of people interviewed believed the intermediate unit should persist after reorganization of school districts at the local level. He observed, however, that much less agreement was evidenced about the functions which the intermediate office should perform after reorganization. Significantly, local district superintendents tended to assign a large role to the intermediate office closely paralleling the role assigned to the local district. Beem found great variation in the conceptions held by educational and lay leaders concerning functions of the intermediate agency.<sup>2</sup>

Research in Oregon also supported the contention that the intermediate level does have a place in the total system after local districts have been reorganized. Consensus was that personnel of local school districts preferred to continue to work with the intermediate unit. The intermediate agency was preferred because of lack of proximity to the state agency, which is usually more distant and consequently more difficult to contact. General opinion indicated that the Intermediate Education District, Oregon's intermediate unit, is an effective liaison between the local school district and the State Department of Education.<sup>3</sup>

Sabin also concluded that the intermediate unit is needed in Oregon and other states even after local district reorganization has been con-

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<sup>1</sup> McLure, op.cit., pp. 35-36.

<sup>2</sup> Harlan D. Beem, "A Study of the Intermediate Unit of School Administration in Michigan" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1957).

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Association of Intermediate Education Districts and County Superintendents, op. cit., p. 12.

summated. However, he emphasized that:

The intermediate school district must undergo significant changes in purpose, function and organization if it is to maintain its place as an important link in the chain of public school organization in the United States, and in Oregon particularly.<sup>1</sup>

According to Sabin, the intermediate district formerly served primarily rural districts, but the situation has been drastically altered since 1900. Various social, cultural, and technological changes have resulted in the reorganization of many local school districts into larger and more efficient basic administrative units. He noted that developments of the past two decades have led to extensive reevaluation of the intermediate district in many states including Oregon. Sabin suggested that authorities are now stating that the new role of the intermediate office should emphasize the development of leadership in the improvement of education and the provision of services to local districts. He believed that the intermediate unit should also continue to serve in a liaison capacity between the state department of education and the local school districts.<sup>2</sup>

Sabin concluded that reorganization does profoundly affect the intermediate unit. However, he held that the basic factors affecting the role and function of the intermediate unit do not change, per se. The alterations occur within the factors and resultant effects are indeed significant and should bring about revised and restructured role and functions if such units are to perform capably in the modern world.<sup>3</sup> Sabin thus concurred with previously cited contentions that the intermediate administrative unit should be service-oriented with specific services determined by the needs and aspirations of the area within the boundaries of the intermediate district.<sup>4</sup> To this statement, Sabin added various other local characteristics peculiar to the area making up the specific intermediate district.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sabin, op. cit., p. 413.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 414.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 414-415.

<sup>4</sup>Isenberg (ed.), The Community School and the Intermediate Unit, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Sabin, loc. cit.

In three studies at the University of Nebraska, it was noted that some type of intermediate agency would be necessary even after extensive reorganization and consolidation of local school districts. These studies were concerned primarily with rural areas in which population was sparse. McPherran observed that:

Even after the completion of effective programs of school district reorganization, however, the majority of local school districts will be unable to provide a complete educational program, including specialized educational services, on an economically sound basis. Many services are too costly for small local school districts to provide for themselves. An intermediate school district, by serving a number of small local school districts, will be able to provide them at a reasonable cost.<sup>1</sup>

Ellison noted that sound reorganization will continue to play a prominent role in extending educational opportunities to rural students. She believed, however, that many services in special fields would still be lacking in some reorganized districts if such services are not provided by another agency. The intermediate unit serving a number of local districts through its central office facilities was suggested as the logical agency to provide and justify these services. She also contended that the intermediate unit had the potential to preserve local autonomy.<sup>2</sup>

Ellison concluded that Nebraska should have an intermediate district structure in which county political boundaries are ignored, since the majority of local districts will continue to need assistance and services.<sup>3</sup>

Combining of Nebraska counties into regional intermediate districts was also recommended by Turner. Due to sparse populations in some areas of the state, 31 intermediate units were proposed. Turner

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<sup>1</sup>Archie L. McPherran, "The Nature and Role of the Intermediate District in American Education" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1954), p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth B. Ellison, "A Study to Determine an Adequate Intermediate Unit or Units for a Distinct Geographical Area in Nebraska" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1959) p. 233.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 234.



suggested a minimum average enrollment of 5,000 pupils for each intermediate area.<sup>1</sup> Butterworth and Crane recommended intermediate districts of this low minimum pupil population for New York.<sup>2</sup> McLure stated that 5,000 pupils would be required for "reasonable efficiency" in an intermediate operation. He acknowledged, however, that excessive distances could make even this minimum figure impossible in some sparsely settled areas.<sup>3</sup> McPherran, who also took into consideration the sparsity of population in some regions of Nebraska, had offered 4,000 as the minimum pupil enrollment.<sup>4</sup> Most authorities, however, agreed that 4,000 to 5,000 pupils is too few for the most adequate intermediate district in most areas.

Using 1960 statistics, Lane, Corwin, and Monahan made a similar point about local school district enrollments. They reported that large numbers of school children were being educated in relatively few school districts. In Iowa the eleven largest districts in 1960 enrolled 26 per cent of the public school pupils. The five largest local districts enrolled approximately 110,000 children, while the total enrollment of the 308 smallest school districts was approximately 106,700. The Des Moines public schools listed as many children as the combined enrollment of 165 of the smallest local school districts.<sup>5</sup>

Concerted reorganization efforts during the 1960's have resulted in continued reduction in the total number of school districts in Iowa. The general pattern of pupil distribution throughout the state remains basically unchanged, however.

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<sup>1</sup>Glenn E. Turner, "The Location and Administration of Intermediate School Districts for the State of Nebraska" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1959), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Julian E. Butterworth and Edmund H. Crane, A New Intermediate School District for New York State (Albany, N.Y.: State Education Department, 1957), p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>McLure, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

<sup>4</sup>McPherran, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>5</sup>Willard R. Lane, Ronald G. Corwin, and William G. Monahan, Foundations of Educational Administration (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967), pp. 175-176.



In a recent national publication, Fitzwater documented an even more pronounced national trend than that observed in Iowa. He called attention to the increasing concentration of the nation's total school enrollment in fewer and fewer local school districts and attributed this development to urbanization and district reorganization. As shown in Table 4, 146 school districts in the United States had 25,000 or more pupils in the fall of 1964. These 146 districts constituted only six-tenths of one per cent of the nation's school districts but enrolled 27.5 per cent of all public school pupils. The three largest size groups (in excess of 6,000 enrollment) totaled 1,231 districts and had 55.6 per cent of all public school pupils. Fitzwater indicated that one-third of the total public school students could be found in the next two size groups. Included in these categories were districts with 3,000 to 5,999 and 1,200 to 2,999 pupils. He reported that in 1964 there were 13,762 school districts with fewer than 300 children. These districts made up 52.9 per cent of all operating school districts but contained only 2.3 per cent of the total enrollment in the public schools.<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwater also demonstrated the effects of urbanization and reorganization of local school districts by comparing numbers of districts according to enrollment categories for the years 1957 and 1965. These data, presented in Table 5, indicate that during an eight-year period from 1957 to 1965, the number of school systems with 25,000 or more pupils increased from 107 to 157, or 46.7 per cent. The largest relative gain, 84.1 per cent, was in the 12,000 to 24,999 group. Fitzwater deemed it significant that every size category above 1,200 students increased in number of districts while every group below 1,200 students decreased. He observed that the smaller the size group the larger the decrease. He noted specifically that in 1965, the first time that records have been kept on the subject, the number of operating districts fewer than 300 students made up less than half of the total number of school districts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles O. Fitzwater, "Patterns and Trends in State School System Development" Journal On State School Systems Development, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1967), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND ENROLLMENTS  
BY ENROLLMENT SIZE OF SYSTEM FOR THE UNITED STATES,  
FALL, 1964<sup>1</sup>

Enrollment Size	Number of Systems	Per Cent	Enrollment	Per Cent
25,000 or more	146	.6	11,044,000	27.5
12,000 - 24,999	307	1.2	4,995,400	12.4
6,000 - 11,999	778	3.0	6,320,700	15.7
3,000 - 5,999	1,608	6.2	6,631,200	16.5
1,200 - 2,999	2,562	13.7	6,647,700	16.6
600 - 1,199	3,187	12.3	2,584,900	6.4
300 - 599	2,641	10.1	1,057,240	2.6
Operating systems with 300 or more pupils	12,229	47.1	39,280,940	97.7
Operating systems with 300 or less pupils	<u>13,762</u>	<u>52.9</u>	<u>936,275</u>	<u>2.3</u>
Total operating systems	25,991	100.0	40,217,215	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
BY ENROLLMENT SIZE  
1957 - 1965<sup>1</sup>

Enrollment Size (Number of Pupils)	Number of School Districts		Change	
	1957	1965	Number	Per Cent
25,000 or more	107	157	50	46.7
12,000 to 24,999	176	324	148	84.1
6,000 to 11,999	549	805	256	46.6
3,000 to 5,999	1,178	1,649	471	40.0
1,200 to 2,999	2,859	3,530	671	23.5
600 to 1,199	3,221	3,121	-100	- 3.1
300 to 599	4,013	3,260	-753	-18.8
1 to 299	<u>32,097</u>	<u>11,690</u>	<u>-20,400</u>	<u>-63.6</u>
All Districts	44,200	24,536	-19,664	-44.5

Fitzwater concisely demonstrated the widespread aspects of re-districting at the local level. His rank ordering of individual states by percentage reduction in the number of school districts between the 1945-46 school year and 1966 is shown in Table 6.

Since 1945 only Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Utah, and West Virginia made no changes in the organization of local districts. Six other states, Alabama, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Virginia, had more local districts in 1966 than in the 1945-46

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

school year. The remaining 38 states reduced the number of school districts in their state systems. The 38 are rank ordered in Table 6 according to the percentage of reduction. Twenty-six of the states reduced the number of districts by more than one-half. Eighteen states showed reductions exceeding 75 per cent, and six had an elimination rate of more than 90 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Data sources and time periods utilized in the development of Table 6 were not identical to those used in the Tables 3,4 and 5. Therefore, some slight discrepancies are apparent.

TABLE 6  
RANK ORDER OF THE STATES BY PER CENT REDUCTION  
IN NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS BETWEEN  
1945 - 46 AND FALL 1966<sup>2</sup>

State	Number of Districts		Reduction	
	1945-46	Fall 1966	Number	Per Cent
Mississippi	4,194	149	4,045	96.4
Kansas	6,906	349	6,557	94.9
South Carolina	1,703	108	1,595	93.6
Nevada	237	17	220	92.8
Wisconsin	6,393	535	5,858	91.6
Colorado	1,871	183	1,688	90.2
Missouri	8,558	888	7,670	89.6
Idaho	1,114	117	997	89.5
Iowa	4,775	501	4,274	89.5
Illinois	9,861	1,340	8,521	86.4
Minnesota	7,657	1,324	6,333	82.7
Arkansas	2,179	398	1,781	81.7
New York	5,112	986	4,126	80.7

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

TABLE 6 (Continued)

State	Number of Districts		Reduction	
	1945-46	Fall 1966	Number	Per Cent
Michigan	4,572	930	3,642	79.6
Oklahoma	4,416	994	3,422	77.5
Pennsylvania	2,543	595	1,948	76.6
North Dakota	2,273	547	1,726	75.9
Oregon	1,607	390	1,217	75.7
Nebraska	6,987	2,388	4,599	65.8
Indiana	1,131	406	725	64.1
Texas	3,605	1,303	2,302	63.8
Delaware	126	51	75	59.5
Alaska	66	27	39	59.1
Ohio	1,622	712	910	56.1
California	2,629	1,187	1,442	54.8
Wyoming	361	173	188	52.1
Washington	691	360	331	47.9
South Dakota	3,415	2,015	1,400	41.0
Montana	1,382	873	509	36.8
Maine	500	342	158	31.6
Kentucky	256	200	56	21.9
New Hampshire	240	199	41	17.1
New Mexico	103	90	13	12.6
Arizona	338	298	40	11.8
Georgia	208	196	12	5.7
Vermont	269	262	7	2.6
North Carolina	171	169	2	1.2
Tennessee	152	151	1	.6
TOTALS	100,223	21,753	78,470	78.3

It is true that local district reorganization has been extensive in many states, but the task is far from being complete. There are persistent problems of proliferation of school districts in some states and extremes in size of student enrollment in existing district structures. Some local districts provide no direct programs to pupils, some serve few pupils, while others serve large numbers of students.



Variations in school district area are equally striking. Elko County, a local district in Nevada, embraces an area longer than Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island combined. The Nye District in Nevada is even larger and covers 18,064 square miles.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, some districts in other parts of the United States have only a few square miles of territory but serve many thousands of students.

Local districts may vary significantly in other ways, including (1) capacity to finance schools, (2) the scope of educational needs provided, and (3) the training, experience, and performance of teachers and administrative personnel. As expressed by Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, contrasts in quality have existed for decades, and it will take many more decades to reduce differences and establish more adequate basic administrative districts.<sup>2</sup>

Fitzwater enumerated several positive factors in school redistricting trends:

1. Continued progress in eliminating nonoperating districts...
2. The requirement in an increasing number of states that all reorganized districts be unified or organized to operate both elementary and high schools.
3. A related trend has been the requirement by a growing number of states that all territory of the state be in a district maintaining a high school.....
4. The inclusion of more than one small high school district in a reorganized district.
5. The merging of previously established small reorganized units...
6. The merger of small or medium-sized city districts with the open country districts surrounding them...

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<sup>1</sup>American Association of School Administrators, School District Reorganization: Journey That Must Not End (Washington: AASA and NEA Department of Rural Education, 1962), pp. 81-83.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 104.

7. Merging all or nearly all of the districts within a county into a single administrative unit...
8. The formation of large suburban districts adjoining major cities...
9. The merger of independent city districts and adjoining county school districts...
10. In county unit school districts, ..., the consolidation of small high schools...
11. The formation of separately organized regional high school districts embracing the territory of several town (or township) school districts...<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwater commented that much remains to be done if school districts are to ever be organized effectively at the local level. He noted that many states which have been very active in redistricting are still numbered among those with a large proportion of districts with less than 1,200 students.<sup>2</sup>

The same writer suggested that a major weakness in reorganization efforts has been a general tendency of local people and planning bodies to regard as optimum for their particular situation the minimum standards for size of school and district. According to Fitzwater, a related weakness has been failure to differentiate between small schools made necessary by isolation and population sparsity and small schools that could be consolidated without undue inconvenience or hazards for pupils.<sup>3</sup>

As noted earlier in this chapter, some authors feel that district reorganization and social and economic changes have ended the need for any type of middle-echelon organization in the state system for public education. Most authorities, however, seem to sense some need for a middle agency. All would agree, though, that the intermediate unit itself

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<sup>1</sup>Fitzwater, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.

must undergo extensive restructuring if it is to perform educational functions in the modern world. Inadequacy of local redistricting, sparsity of population, and additional need for expanded programs and services are the most commonly expressed reasons for modification and continued existence of the intermediate unit.

#### IV. ALTERNATIVES TO THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT

It is obvious that a central consideration in the literature revolves around the question of whether the intermediate unit is or is not needed. Those who feel that the intermediate agency should be abolished believe that there are better ways to meet educational needs.

As previously emphasized, Cubberley noted a tremendous increase in the types of educational leadership, programs, and services. He advocated centralization of administration at the county level, a proposal that has contributed to the development of county-unit local districts in several states. It was through county-unit organization that Cubberley saw a way to organize local districts large enough to provide adequate programs and services without intermediate units.<sup>1</sup> Others have simply proposed mandated local combinations of districts into single administrative units with no less than 10,000 or 12,000 pupils.<sup>2</sup>

Trent joined Cubberley as a supporter of the county-unit type of local administrative district in lieu of the intermediate agency.<sup>3</sup> Edwards concurred and suggested that the county-unit district should be the basic administrative unit in Kansas.<sup>4</sup> The same conclusion about local district structure in Kansas was previously recommended by Euler.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cubberley, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Howard A. Dawson and William W. Trent, "Is the County the Most Satisfactory Unit for School Administration?" School Life, Vol. 25 (February, 1940), pp. 144-146.

<sup>4</sup>R. M. Edwards, The County Superintendent, Bulletin No. 20 (Emporia: Kansas State Teachers College, 1940).

<sup>5</sup>Harrison L. Euler, County Unification In Kansas (New York: Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935).

Seyfried agreed with this in reference to Maryland,<sup>1</sup> and an earlier Florida report asserted that the county-local concept had found favor in the Southern states.<sup>2</sup>

Several writers in the period from 1920-1940 disagreed with Cubberley. Dawson, for example, argued that the county unit would not properly take into account the promotion of local participation, local initiative, and local control.<sup>3</sup> Parenthetically, it can be observed that Dawson's arguments persist and are still advanced by those who oppose reorganization of small local school districts into larger county-local administrative units.

Dawson also emphasized "natural community boundaries" and stated that these lines usually are not coterminous with county boundaries.<sup>4</sup> A similar point of view was later expressed by another writer who observed that the intermediate district is being shaped in the development of reorganized local units of administration in which new definitions of "community" are utilized.<sup>5</sup>

Writing in 1933 Cyr joined those who predicted that county-unit organization for local districts would not be a generally adopted pattern throughout the country. Cyr believed that a majority of states would continue to have some kind of middle-level service agency.<sup>6</sup>

McLure hypothesized that opposition to the county as the basic unit was the dominant point of view in states having the county intermediate

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<sup>1</sup>McLure, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Florida Work Conference On School Administration Problems, Handbook for County Superintendents in Florida, Bulletin No. 19 (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education, 1940).

<sup>3</sup>Dawson and Trent, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>McLure, op. cit., pp. 33-35, 19-20.

<sup>6</sup>Frank W. Cyr, Responsibility for Rural School Administration (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933).



structure. He suggested that if this postulate is true, it would be reasonable to conclude that the dominant point of view stems from a pronounced desire to keep the local or basic district close to what he termed the "sociological community." As previously mentioned, however, McLure speculated as to the effect of the broader conception of "community" evident in reorganization efforts in many predominately rural states. He suggested, therefore, that if this broader "community" trend became the pattern for local districts, a basic framework would be established for a revitalized and restructured intermediate organization.<sup>1</sup>

A second alternative to the intermediate structure, as discussed by Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, admitted that some local school districts may remain small. Cooperative agreements among the small local districts are thus suggested as a replacement for the intermediate-service unit. For instance, an audio-visual center could be established through voluntary cooperation of several districts with cost prorated among the districts. It might also be possible for a smaller district to contract with a larger neighboring district for specific services.<sup>2</sup>

Proponents of the plan for cooperative agreements and contractual arrangements among local districts have pointed out that some county intermediate units do encourage such arrangements. Many county superintendents have acted to facilitate agreements among local units in order to provide needed services on a cooperative basis. Therefore, some writers believe that the intermediate unit is not really needed. The question is raised whether such cooperative plans would be fostered without the vision and encouragement of professional educators sometimes not found in small local districts.<sup>3</sup>

A third suggested solution is the decentralization of state education departments. Some authorities have suggested that, in place of an intermediate unit of school government and the accompanying proliferation of governing boards, the state department could establish a number of regional offices throughout the state. Each office would be staffed with qualified personnel capable of furnishing consultative services to local board members, administrators, and teachers. These consultants could

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<sup>1</sup>McLure, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



also provide the necessary leadership and coordination for the establishment of cooperative programs among the local school districts. State branch offices could also furnish well-trained specialized personnel in instruction, guidance, and other areas.<sup>1</sup>

As discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, several writers have voiced serious objections to the establishment of state education department regional offices. Fears of increased state control and state education officials failing to meet local needs were mentioned.<sup>2</sup> In addition, one author who advocated the establishment of state branch offices made his remarks contingent upon very extensive reorganization and consolidation of local administrative units. He felt that the branch office plan would function properly only if the total number of local districts could be reduced to approximately 5,000.<sup>3</sup>

Campbell, Cunningham and McPhee were cognizant of the danger that the proposal for state department regional offices might be perceived as an encroachment on local control. They indicated that the possible centralizing of school operation under state auspices might be construed as a program not in keeping with the usual picture of school development in the United States.<sup>4</sup> They saw one very pertinent idea emerging from the regional branch office concept, however. They noted that as a new arrangement, decentralized regional offices could be established where needed.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, these offices need not necessarily be placed in every county.

Two of the suggested alternatives to the intermediate unit were clearly treated by Campbell, Cunningham and McPhee, who concluded that the intermediate agency could be eliminated but, preferably should be reconceived:

...the first alternative, then, is one of elimination to adopt such a plan in terms of making available a comprehensive program to most people would require a reorganization of school districts beyond anything

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., pp. 280-281.

<sup>3</sup>Van Miller, op. cit., pp. 137-139.

<sup>4</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

now contemplated. If a minimum student enrollment is needed, as can be logically supported, in order to provide a comprehensive educational program, this would mean, for Wyoming, dividing the state into four or five school districts. The closest approximation to this arrangement we now have is in the state of Alaska where, except for a few city school districts, everything else is in District #1. Obviously, for our sparsely populated states, and for sparsely populated areas in other states, distance, to say nothing of social resistance, would seem to argue against an attempt to eliminate the intermediate unit and to make each district self-sufficient.

The second alternative might also involve elimination of the intermediate unit and a decentralization of the state department of education into regional offices. New Jersey appears already to have moved in this direction. The county superintendent is considered a member of the state department of education staff; he is appointed, paid by, and responsible to the state board of education. More than a decade ago the New Jersey legislature provided for area service programs including state funds to help finance such programs. These centers now exist in nearly all of the state's 21 counties. New Jersey has more than 500 school districts; of these, more than 400 receive services.

For a small highly industrialized state like New Jersey, this plan seems to have many advantages. One level of government is eliminated, services complementary to those provided by local school districts are available, and coordination with the state department of education appears to be complete. Whether or not our larger and more diversified states are ready for such a plan is still a question. If people in these states resist centralization of government at the state level, movement in this direction would be very slow. To make the New Jersey plan work in populous states such as Ohio and Illinois would

require a very large number of professionals being placed on the staff of the state department of education and hence a generous state department budget. At this time we are inclined to reject the decentralized state department plan as not the best solution for many of our states.<sup>1</sup>

## V. THE FUTURE OF THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT

An extensive review of the literature has demonstrated that the intermediate unit of educational administration is truly on trial. It is equally apparent that the role and function of the agency in modern times has not yet been clearly conceptualized and defined in many states. Thus, Isenberg's comment that the middle echelon organization is still evolving into a newer type of intermediate unit is very appropriate.<sup>2</sup>

It has been shown that several writers in the field of educational administration favor the complete abolishment of the middle echelon office. A majority, however, hold the belief that the intermediate unit does indeed have a future in the total state system of public education. Most of these authorities emphasize, however, that the traditional intermediate unit must at least be restructured, revitalized, and expanded in programs and services if it is to perform a worthwhile function in public education.

Critics who have advocated the total abandonment of the intermediate organization have suggested at least three major possibilities for replacement of the unit. These alternatives were discussed in the previous section of this chapter, and the conclusion was reached that none of these was satisfactory.

McPherran, as a result of his previously cited research, joined the many who predicted a meaningful and service-oriented future for the intermediate unit. It is apparent, however, that some his perceptions were limited by the time period in which his study was conducted, because writers in the field of educational administration had not yet come to full

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<sup>1</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

<sup>2</sup>Isenberg Address, "The Evolving Intermediate Unit," op. cit., pp. 26-27.

acceptance of the broadened area concept of the intermediate unit. Of particular note is McPherran's comment that California and Iowa have the smallest number of counties that were considered to be inadequate to function as intermediate school districts by his criteria. When the McPherran criteria were applied, only 5.1 per cent of Iowa counties and 8.8 per cent of the California counties were deemed inadequate to serve as single county intermediate units. The researcher therefore concluded that only California and Iowa could retain their counties as intermediate school districts without extensive change in structure.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, this conclusion, particularly with reference to Iowa, has been refuted in light of later developments.

In 1959, Anderson also considered the status and possible future of the county and intermediate superintendency in the state of Nebraska. He, too, saw a distinct need for the intermediate unit in Nebraska's educational future. He particularly emphasized that the middle-echelon administrative office could provide needed programs and services and could thus contribute significantly to the equalization of educational opportunity for the state's public school pupils.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking in 1965, Emerson admitted that to discuss the future of anything is to engage in speculation. He believed, however, that it was safe to say that the intermediate district in most three-echelon states has a very healthy future, although a "major transfusion" is needed in several states.<sup>3</sup>

In Emerson's opinion Pennsylvania, Iowa, Illinois, and California should be watched closely for outstanding future development of the intermediate form of school administration. He noted that Pennsylvania has long had a good reorganization plan that has not yet been implemented. He pointed out that two county intermediate units in Pennsylvania are already considered models, and their example should lead shortly to state-wide intermediate reorganization.<sup>4</sup>

The apparently sound legislative proposals in Iowa, backed by a good second-echelon tradition in metropolitan areas and serious, ongoing study

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<sup>1</sup>McPherran, op. cit., p. 302.

<sup>2</sup>Fred W. W. Anderson, "The County Superintendency in Nebraska-- Current Status and Possible Future" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1959).

<sup>3</sup>Emerson paper, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



and research, were cited. Emerson indicated, also, that Illinois and California were then in the throes of self-study that could well result in outstanding intermediate organization for those two states. He declared further that implementation of good intermediate legislation would soon be obvious in New York and Michigan. He called attention to the fact that New York already had some fine and energetic cooperative service boards and pointed to his own state of Michigan as a place where outstanding development of the middle echelon service concept could be envisioned in the very immediate future.<sup>1</sup>

In a recent address, Isenberg also demonstrated his faith in the future of the intermediate unit. He stated, however, that the single county intermediate unit system still found in several states can no longer be justified under current conditions and will certainly not have a place in the future organization for effective public school education. The speaker noted the obvious and coming trend toward inclusion of multi-county areas in reorganized intermediate units. He suggested that development of intermediate units encompassing an area of two or more counties will be the only practical means of approach for states who decide to retain the tri-level organizational pattern.<sup>2</sup>

Many other authorities have emphasized the necessity for regional approach to intermediate restructuring and have predicted increased importance for intermediate units organized on a multi-county basis. Fitzwater concluded that such area restructuring constitutes an emerging and significant trend. In support of his position, he cited recent regional intermediate legislation in Wisconsin, Michigan, Nebraska, Washington, and Oregon. He also mentioned pending legislation in several states including New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Oregon. He hypothesized that all intermediate agencies in non-metropolitan regions would eventually reorganize into areas large enough to permit their effective operation as educational service agencies.<sup>3</sup>

Referring to California, a report prepared by Arthur D. Little, Inc., stressed the ever-present need for "intermediate administration" but

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>2</sup>Robert M. Isenberg, "National Trends--Intermediate Unit Concept," An address to the Workshop for Iowa School Superintendents, Spirit Lake, Iowa, June, 1967.

<sup>3</sup>Fitzwater, "Patterns and Trends In State School System Development," op. cit., pp. 28-32.



pointed out that the intermediate unit should no longer be based on county political boundaries.<sup>1</sup> A similar suggestion was offered for the future development of the intermediate district in Illinois. Included in this recommendation was a stipulation that the intermediate structure should extend only to "reasonable" geographic limits in sparsely settled areas.<sup>2</sup>

"The Hoffman Report" supported contentions that the intermediate unit should play a very prominent role in educational systems of the future. The necessity for "reorganization of county offices of education into more effective intermediate units not necessarily confined to county boundary lines" was emphasized.<sup>3</sup>

Noting that in California the office of county superintendent is constitutionally required and plays a prominent educational role, Hoffman pointed out that total elimination or restructuring of the office would be virtually impossible. He insisted that the broadened area approach would be beneficial but recognized that such a change could not appear in the near future. For the interim, he suggested added cooperative educational activities in California, carried out within the framework of what has come to be known as "the flexible intermediate unit concept."<sup>4</sup> This concept has been described in the following terms:

A flexible intermediate unit exists when two or more county school offices join to finance and administer a common project over an indefinite period of time. Through the exercise of joint powers of agreement, an act, or a contract, they define the problem, determine its budget and method of finance, agree on its administrative center, and delegate the authority needed to carry out the program. These programs may vary from joint usage of an audio-visual library by two counties to an educational television program over a geographic area, or the production of a curriculum or study guide for

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur D. Little, Inc., op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>The Task Force on Education, op. cit., p. 180.

<sup>3</sup>Hoffman, The Flexible Intermediate Unit in California, op. cit., pp. 184-185.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 184-185.

mathematics, social studies, or foreign language. Its flexibility in terms of operation in a small or large area depends on the program involved.<sup>1</sup>

From his study of school district organization in Utah, McHenry concluded that an effective intermediate structure will be necessary for quality educational programs in that state. The combination-of-counties approach was recommended. McHenry acknowledged the definite trend in Utah toward greater assumption of responsibility for a control of public school education by the centralized state education agency. He, however, found considerable evidence to indicate that many local districts were located too far from the state capital to receive various types of services directly from state sources. He felt, also, that there would be considerable merit in receiving services from an agency located closer to the local level, because such an agency could better understand local problems and needs. As have other writers, McHenry cited the intermediate unit's ability to equalize educational opportunity by providing services that some local school systems are not able to provide for themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Sabin cited an acute need for expanded intermediate units in Oregon,<sup>3</sup> and a second Oregon study reported similar findings. These researchers pointed out that some of Oregon's educational problems have been caused by great distances and geographical barriers, while others resulted from uneven distribution of population and wealth. Therefore, the intermediate unit was considered essential as a means of solving, or at least lessening, some of the problems.<sup>4</sup>

Rhode Island has long been classified as a two-echelon state in which no provision is made for the intermediate or middle-echelon agency in the total educational system. It is interesting to note, however, that a Boston University survey team recently developed a model for public school district organization in a portion of Washington County, Rhode Island. One recommendation from the study conducted at the request of

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<sup>1</sup>California Association of County Superintendents of Schools and County Boards of Education Section of California School Boards Association, "The Committee of Ten," The Future Role and Function, Size, Structure, and Organization of the Intermediate Unit in California (September, 1966), pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>McHenry dissertation, op. cit., pp. 228-231.

<sup>3</sup>Sabin dissertation, op. cit., pp. 415-416.

<sup>4</sup>Oregon Association of Intermediate Education Districts and County District Superintendents, op. cit., p. 12.

the Rhode Island State Board of Education is particularly significant:

The State Board of Education should establish a pilot Educational Leadership Center for the towns of Charlestown, Hopkinton, Narragansett, Richmond, South Kingstown, and Westerly. Funds for the support of the pilot center should be appropriated by the General Assembly. While it may be possible for the Center to extend its services through the use of federal grants, the basic support and control should be provided by the State of Rhode Island. Appropriations of funds must provide for personnel, facilities, equipment and supplies for the Center. Salary ranges for personnel must be adequate to attract and hold superior personnel in a highly competitive market. The cost of establishing and operating this pilot center is estimated to be \$50,000 for the first year. In subsequent years the costs may be expected to increase in proportion to the increase in services provided to the school districts.<sup>1</sup>

The broad purpose of the Educational Leadership Center was stated as providing services which are not readily available to separate school districts or which can be provided more efficiently by a larger unit. The study team mentioned electronic data processing and mental health services as specific examples.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that a traditional two-echelon state such as Rhode Island sees a need for experimentation with the area service agency concept would appear to reflect favorably on the future of the intermediate unit. The report ended with the following suggestion for evaluation of the area service concept:

At the conclusion of five years of the operation of the Center an evaluation of the quality and scope of the services rendered should enable the Board of Education to determine the applicability of the Educational Leadership Center concept to other areas of Rhode Island.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond H. Ostrander, et. al., A Pilot Plan For Educational Leadership in Rhode Island (Boston: School of Education, Boston University, 1967), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

Thus, it would appear that many authorities in the field believe that the intermediate unit does indeed have a future in American education. All would concur, however, that to be successful in its important task, the traditional county intermediate agency must be revitalized and must undergo widespread restructuring and reorganization. According to most writers, the broad area, or regional approach represents the only solution to the intermediate agency's structural problems. This would mean that county lines would no longer be sacred. Regional educational service agencies would thus be formed through combinations of counties or by disregarding county boundaries and organizing large areas into a service agency.

Although most educational writers agree on a meaningful future for the intermediate unit, there have been, and will continue to be, many dissenters. Some of their viewpoints have been considered. Because several authorities have questioned the intermediate agency's place in an urbanized society and its relationship to larger local school districts, the future of the intermediate unit in metropolitan-suburban areas will be treated separately in the next section.

#### The Intermediate Unit in Urban Areas

Migration from rural to urban areas has represented a pronounced trend in the United States during the past quarter century. Between 1940 and 1950, the total population in America increased by almost 18.3 million. However, only 3.5 million of this total was reflected in population increases in what have been classified as non-metropolitan areas. Stated in terms of rural-urban net migration, non-metropolitan areas lost 9.3 per cent of population between 1940 and 1950. Interestingly enough, the central cities showed a 1.6 per cent decline during the same period, but the suburban areas of the "megapolis" had a net population gain of 26.7 per cent. Migration patterns from rural to urban regions and from the core city to its satellites are, therefore, readily identifiable as nationwide trends.<sup>1</sup>

The recognizable population patterns of the 1940 to 1950 period continued throughout the 1950's. With reference to the country's specifically defined 212 standard metropolitan statistical areas, the population of the central cities increased by 10.8 per cent from 1940 to 1950. At the same time, suburban areas experienced a startling 48.5

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<sup>1</sup>Donald J. Bogue, The Population of the United States (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), p. 55.



per cent gain in population while the rural or non-metropolitan population rose 7.1 per cent. Suburban growth at the expense of the central core can be stated even more dramatically. Nine of America's twelve largest cities actually lost population between 1950 and 1960, despite the fact that the country as a whole was growing in population at an almost phenomenal rate.<sup>1</sup>

During the period from 1960 to 1965, the total number of people in the standard metropolitan statistical areas increased by approximately thirteen million, but only 20 per cent of this increase was in the central cities. In 1960, 51.4 per cent of the total metropolitan area population could be found in the central cities. By 1965, this percentage had, for the first time, dropped below 50 per cent to approximately 48 per cent. It can be noted, also, that in 1920 less than twenty-four million people, or 33 per cent of the total population resided in the standard metropolitan statistical areas. In 1950, 85 million, or approximately 56 per cent of the country's population, lived in the metropolitan areas, while by 1960, 63 per cent were residing in these areas.<sup>2</sup>

One writer forecast a rise in total population of at least 30 million people in the 1960's with urban regions receiving at least twenty-five million of this increase. Thus, by 1970, over two-thirds of the people of the United States may live in the standard metropolitan areas. If recent trends continue, the majority of the residents of the "megalopolis" will be found in the suburbs.<sup>3</sup>

Another source cited similar figures and estimated that 170 million people, 70 per cent of the country's population, will be residents of metropolitan complexes in 1980. If the prediction is reasonably accurate, the urban increase will encompass approximately 95 per cent of the total 47.3 million population increase projected over the next fifteen-year period.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 13-23.

<sup>2</sup>Ellis G. Hanson, "The Impact of Demographic Changes On Local Schools Districts," A Paper Presented At the Central Regional Conference of the National Association of State Boards of Education, Des Moines, Iowa, April, 1967, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Catherine B. Wurster, "Framework For an Urban Society," in Goals For Americans, Report of the President's Commission On National Goals (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 225-247.

<sup>4</sup>Hanson, loc. cit.



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Several critics of the intermediate unit believe that the evidence briefly described above will serve to sound the "death knell" for the intermediate organizational agency. Increasing urbanization and the accompanying exodus from the central core to rapidly growing suburban school districts are duly noted by those who advocate the total abandonment of the intermediate concept. Many writers have emphasized the intermediate office role as a leader in rural education and the intermediate unit is considered a structural form totally designed for a rural society. Therefore, in view of obvious and massive urbanization in the United States, some authorities would discontinue operation of the middle-echelon agency, particularly in large metropolitan complexes.<sup>1</sup> Proponents of the intermediate unit have, of late, expressed some very interesting ideas on this subject, however.

Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee noted the progress of the middle-echelon agency in some metropolitan settings. These authors stated that "despite the general confusion regarding the function of the intermediate unit, some intermediate organizations, seemingly most often those in metropolitan settings, have forged ahead with substantial and apparently useful programs."<sup>2</sup>

It is indeed surprising that the intermediate agency seems to have thrived in some urban areas, the very places where many authorities question the need for its continued existence. It is true, nonetheless, that in a number of states the large intermediate units, with mushrooming suburban communities served by relatively large local school districts, have set the pace and have vividly demonstrated what an intermediate service agency can accomplish. This, however, has not been simply a matter of serving small, inadequate local districts until population increase and/or reorganization make them large enough to be self-sufficient. A previous observation that the intermediate unit can function best when local school districts are strongly organized takes on added meaning.<sup>3</sup>

As suggested by Fitzwater, "it is significant that the rapidly increasing size of suburban local districts, rather than resulting in an overall reduction in intermediate unit strength, has been accompanied by a marked expansion and higher degree of specialization in intermediate

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<sup>1</sup>McLure, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>The Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, op. cit., p. 5.

district functions and services."<sup>1</sup> It appears, therefore, that increasing urbanization and "suburbanization" will lead to the strengthening of the intermediate echelon rather than contributing to the end of this form of organization.

The operations of several intermediate units located in densely populated areas in various regions of the country will be described in Chapter IV. Because their constituent districts are usually fairly large in terms of total enrollment, these educational service agencies are not often called upon for some of the more basic programs and services customarily provided by traditional rural area units.

Various writers have emphasized the coordinative functions of large intermediate units in suburban areas. In addition to coordination, one source proposed that five other functions be assigned to the intermediate office. Included were (1) programs and services for exceptional children, (2) supplemental financing designed to equalize educational opportunity, (3) organization and operation of instructional materials centers, (4) long-range planning for school-site location and acquisition, and (5) implementation of further local school district reorganization where necessary.<sup>2</sup>

Writers such as Morphet, Johns, and Reller observed that most people have not faced the issue of the intermediate unit realistically. They noted that many smaller school districts are concerned with autonomy and have struggled to maintain local control against the inroads of the intermediate unit. It appears, however, that such resistance is even more apparent in larger districts which have tended to ignore established intermediate units due to a belief that the larger local school system can provide sufficient programs and services.<sup>3</sup> Impressions gained by the project staff during visitations to intermediate units throughout the United States tended to support this premise, particularly with reference to core city school districts in metropolitan areas.

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<sup>1</sup>Fitzwater, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Education Field Services, School District Reorganization in St. Louis County, Missouri (Chicago: University of Chicago, Graduate School of Education, 1962).

<sup>3</sup>Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op. cit., p. 286.

A recent study in California took note of the metropolitan school district's relationships with the other two echelons in the state's tri-level organization. Although recommending continued and expanded utilization of the intermediate unit, it recognized the fact that very large metropolitan school districts such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego have needs and resources quite different from "the average" school districts.<sup>1</sup>

In a recent address, Isenberg predicted that the intermediate unit-metropolitan school district relationship will soon undergo drastic alteration. He noted that people frequently ask if the large city school should be a part of the intermediate unit. According to Isenberg, this question should be and will soon be answered in the affirmative. He substantiated his position by suggesting that the city's educational future could well depend upon its association with the intermediate unit.<sup>2</sup>

Isenberg called attention to several of the more serious "ills" of American cities. He suggested that financial, racial, and political troubles are bringing serious problems and that cities are experiencing extreme difficulties in providing and sustaining high-quality educational programs. He stated that perhaps the biggest problem of all is that too many big city officials "still stop thinking when they reach the city line," the assumption being that the city's problems somehow begin and end at the city limits.<sup>3</sup> In his opinion, the city needs desperately to be part of the intermediate unit and will eventually recognize this acute need. He expressed the feeling that various intermediate services such as educational television, data processing, and diagnostic clinics do not represent the primary reason for the city school system's affiliation with the intermediate agency. Instead, Isenberg emphasized the benefits resulting to the city from the regional association.<sup>4</sup>

Writers in many and diverse disciplines have stressed the necessity for a regional, or area, approach to the solution of urban problems. In the field of education, Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, among many others, have noted that the fate of the central cities and their suburban

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur D. Little, Inc., op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Isenberg Address, "National Trends--Intermediate Unit Concept," loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

fringes are indeed closely intertwined. These writers call for cooperation and integrated planning on a metropolitan area basis. They believe that planning for education should be related to the planning being done for housing, parks, fire and police protection, transportation, water, sewage disposal, and other services. The intermediate unit should, therefore, correspond to the other metropolitan authorities or special service districts and should include all local school districts within the area.<sup>1</sup>

Stephens noted the proliferation of local governmental units, including various special districts, in the United States. He cited the fact that the 1962 total of 91,185 units included 3,043 counties, 17,997 municipalities, 17,144 townships, 34,678 school districts, and 18,323 special districts. Further Stephens noted that almost 90 per cent of local school districts in the nation are noncoterminous with other local governmental units.<sup>2</sup> It is possible to conclude that if a high degree of intergovernmental cooperation is to be evident in the future, the intermediate unit will have a vital role in these efforts. Particularly in metropolitan areas, this role will be dictated by the noncoterminous nature of local school district and other governmental unit boundary lines.

This conclusion was reinforced by Isenberg in his appeal for intermediate unit-metropolitan school district cooperative activities. He cited as examples of intermediate unit services to city school systems assistance with such endeavors as cooperative financing, attempts to achieve racial balance, retaining leadership within the city, and working effectively with regional planning and other social and welfare agencies whose service areas are larger than the city.<sup>3</sup>

Isenberg stated that cities "are in deep trouble," and added that education in the cities is also in trouble. Therefore, he concluded, "if there is a workable solution, cities will need to develop cooperative working relationships."<sup>4</sup>

Despite abundant evidence underscoring the necessity for inclusion of the city school system in the intermediate district, it must be recog-

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<sup>1</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

<sup>2</sup>Elias R. Stephens, "The Identification and Analysis of Cooperative Programs Between School District Governments and Municipal Governments in the State of Iowa" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1966), pp. 17-25.

<sup>3</sup>Isenberg Address, "National Trends--Intermediate Unit Concept," loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



nized that such is not yet generally the case. The trend is still for the strong middle-level agency to provide quality services to suburban schools while the city system is excluded, usually by the city school's own volition.

Amended House Bill 810, passed in 1965 by the One-Hundred-Sixth General Assembly of Ohio, mandated the preparation of a master plan for school district organization. In the study leading to development of the plan, considerable attention was given to all three levels of the state's three-echelon system for public education. The intermediate unit as the middle agency in the tri-level pattern was the subject of penetrating study and analysis.

Various possibilities, including total abandonment, were considered for the intermediate concept. The study project team recommended that the three echelon system be retained. According to this recommendation, Ohio's present middle echelon agency, county intermediate unit, would be replaced by a regional educational service agency to be known as the Area Educational District (AED).<sup>1</sup>

The Ohio study team apparently recognized that the central city is a part of the total area and noted that all phases of metropolitan activity are increasingly becoming area in nature and scope. The entire metropolitan complex was described as one socioeconomic region, and several public education programs and services which are regional in scope were listed. Included were (1) many aspects of special education (e.g., programs for the deaf, the hard of hearing, the visually handicapped, the crippled), (2) vocational guidance, (3) specialized child study services, (4) educational radio and television, (5) vocational-technical education, and (6) driver and safety education. Urban planning and development on an area basis was also emphasized.<sup>2</sup>

The "Ohio Master Plan" recommended that all school districts in a region be part of an Area Educational District. It was specifically suggested that city school districts should be included in the AED. With reference to suburban schools, the final report stated that these districts should be organized to provide "either limited or comprehensive educational programs," as local conditions and possibilities dictate.

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<sup>1</sup>A Report by the Project Staff, A Master Plan for School District Organization in Ohio (Columbus, Ohio: The State Department of Education, December, 1966), pp. 127-144.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 139.



The study team was adamant in its stand that suburban school districts should also be AED members. Particular mention was made of the point that for reasons of economy, local administrative units enrolling 20,000 or more pupils were desirable. However, smaller basic administrative units were deemed satisfactory if local districts were willing to delegate programs such as vocational-technical education and special education and services to the AED. Local districts of 5,000 students were considered minimal for all of Ohio, however.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1 shows Ohio's proposed three-echelon educational system as envisioned by the research team which prepared the master plan. The various types of arrows used in the diagram are intended to denote varying relationships for programs and services and differing degrees of delegated responsibilities. Basically, Figure 1 indicates that all districts would report directly to the state for services and programs for which there is delegated responsibility. The AED would provide some programs and services to all local school districts. However, such programs and services would be provided much more extensively to those districts, usually the smaller local districts, which administer a limited number of programs and services.<sup>2</sup>

The formation of the Area Educational District to administer all programs and services which cannot be provided adequately, efficiently, or economically by the local administrative units is a key recommendation in the master plan proposed for Ohio. This arrangement was designed primarily to be flexible and adaptable, and to provide for larger city school system membership in the AED.

The underlying philosophy for programs and services to be furnished by the AED can be clarified by close scrutiny of Figure 1. Particular attention should be given to the structure of the arrows designating relationships and the delegation of responsibilities. The same provisions for programs and services will be depicted graphically in Figure 2.

Reference to Figure 2 demonstrates the philosophy in the master plan that every local administrative district in Ohio should be delegated both the authority and the privilege to administer programs and services.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 140-141.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

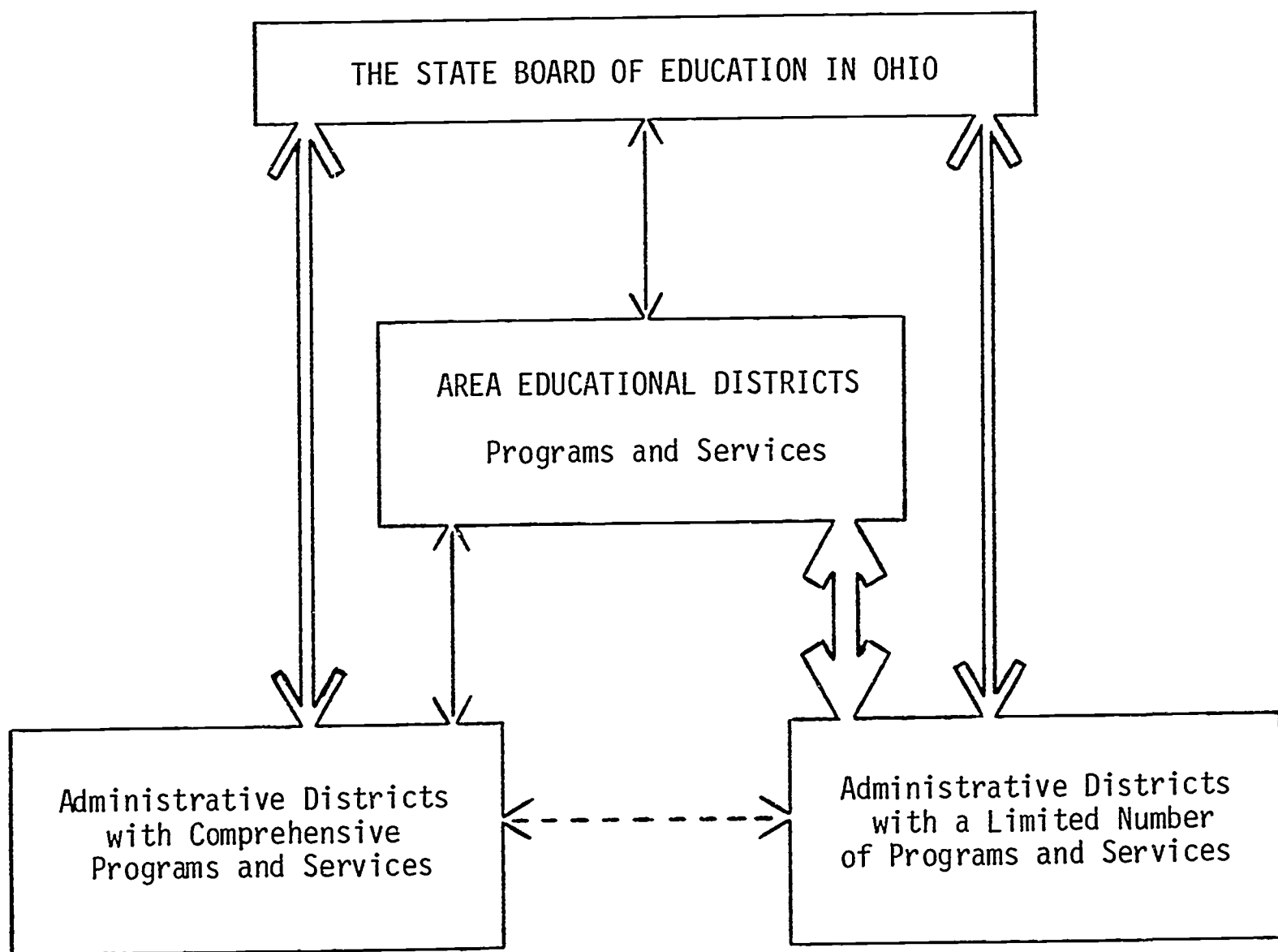


FIGURE 1

OHIO'S PROPOSED THREE-ECHELON  
SYSTEM FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

However, the programs and services provided by the local districts would be limited to those which the specific local unit can administer adequately with efficiency and economy. All other programs and services would be considered as the responsibility of the Area Educational District through a coordinated plan appropriate for the entire area included in the AED.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Ohio plan for the intermediate unit would allow the small local school district to call upon the AED for many more programs and services than the large city district. The intent is for the urban school system to utilize the AED primarily for the various activities which are basically metropolitan in scope or relate to and are a part of the larger socio-economic area around which the AED would be organized.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2 illustrates that the small school district, those between 2,500 and 5,000 total enrollment, might well depend upon the AED for more than half of its necessary programs and services. As larger and larger districts are considered, the percentage of programs and services administered by the Area Educational Districts would be expected to decline markedly. Thus, city school systems such as Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, and Dayton would provide most of their own programs and services.<sup>3</sup>

Ohio's master plan concept and the philosophy underlying the future development of the Area Educational District are indeed significant. Of particular interest will be the attempted implementation of the new AED within the framework of a master plan and the inclusion of the city schools in the intermediate structure.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

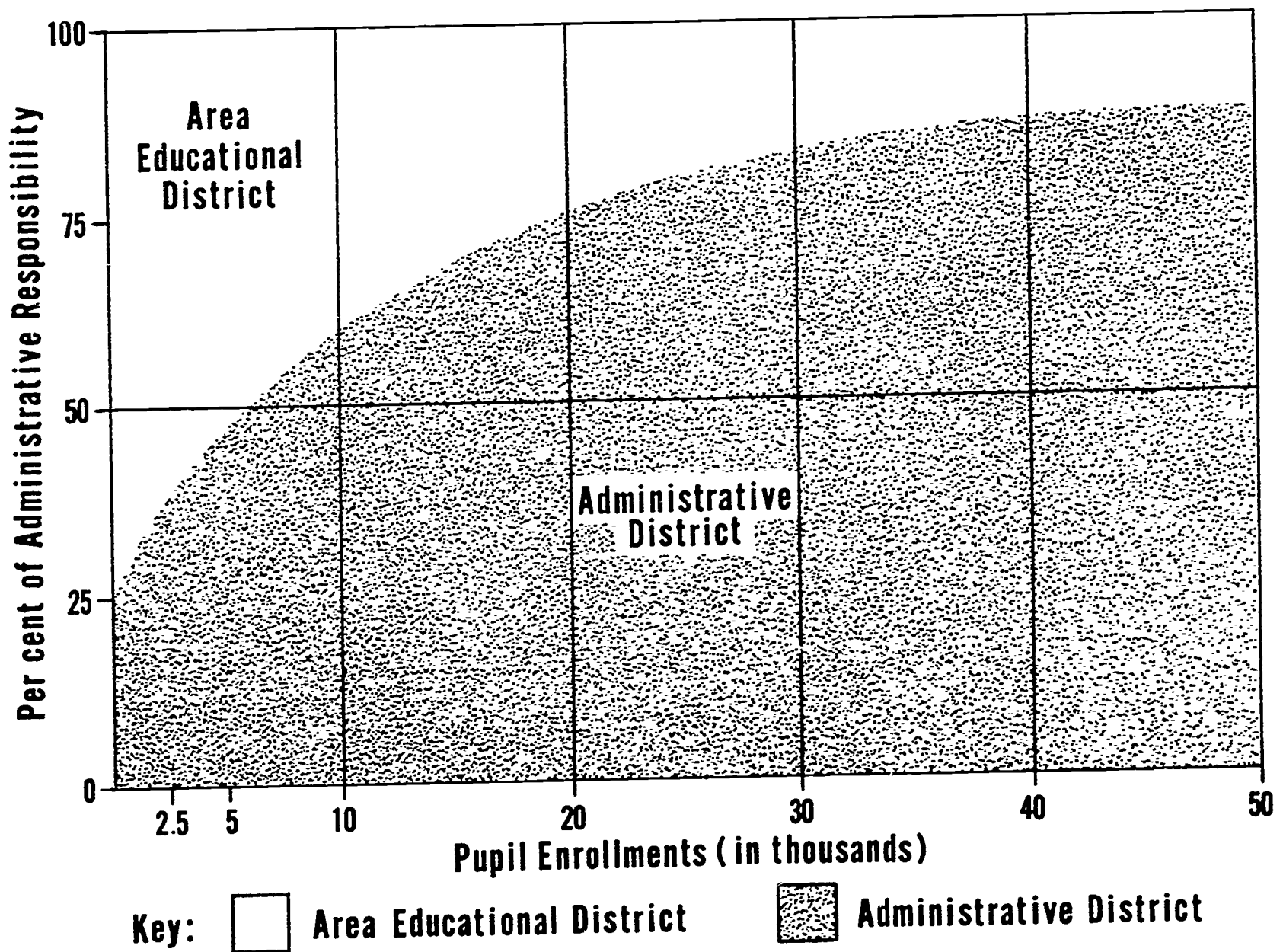


FIGURE 2

A SUGGESTED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AND AREA EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES--OHIO<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 136



## Summary

The intermediate unit does have a possible future in Ohio and other three-echelon states, but the future represents a severe challenge. Significant revitalization must take place if the intermediate district is to merit the enthusiasm of its staunch advocates. One enthusiastic report, in fact, referred to the "new and emerging" intermediate unit in the following terms:

The Intermediate Unit in its newly emerging form is a product of efforts to meet new needs in education. Its benefits have been demonstrated in many parts of the United States, and its potential advantages are being more widely recognized. However, it must undergo still greater development and utilization before it is in a position to deliver all benefits of which it is capable. Unquestionably, much greater use of this important educational agency will come about as a result of the tremendous pressures being placed upon the schools by current world tensions and the growing public demand for better educational opportunities for more people at reasonable cost.

The administrative tool that can make better education possible at less cost has been invented. It now remains for an enlightened public and a resourceful profession to put it to greater use.<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation represents a challenge for the intermediate unit, the educational profession, and public in general. A future role for the middle echelon of the tri-level state system seems to exist. The challenge will be in defining the role, and in restructuring the traditional intermediate unit so that it can successfully fulfill its expectations.

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<sup>1</sup>Alvin E. Rhodes (ed), National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units (Washington: National Education Association, 1963), p. 13.

## CHAPTER III

### A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT

General descriptions of intermediate unit structures, administration and operations in various areas of the United States are presented in Chapter III.

Information was derived primarily from (1) a review of the related literature, (2) materials provided by various intermediate offices, state education agencies, and colleges and universities, (3) consultants, and (4) personal observations gleaned from visitations to many operating intermediate units.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The middle echelon agency, referred to as the intermediate unit in this study, currently operates under several names. A few examples of titles commonly used in several states are:

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 1. California | County Office of Education; County Department of Education; County Schools         |
| 2. Colorado   | Board of Cooperative Services  |
| 3. Illinois   | County School District; Office of County Superintendent                            |
| 4. Iowa       | County School System; Office of County Superintendent; Merged County School System |
| 5. Kansas     | Office of County Superintendent  |
| 6. Michigan   | Intermediate School District   |
| 7. Minnesota  | The County Superintendency; <sup>1</sup> County Education Office                   |

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<sup>1</sup> Frank H. Smith, "An Evaluation of the Intermediate Unit of Public School Administration in Minnesota with a Plan of Reorganization" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1961).

8. Nebraska Educational Service Unit
9. New York Board of Cooperative Educational Services
10. Ohio County School District
11. Oregon Intermediate Education District
12. Pennsylvania County School District; Intermediate District
13. Texas County Department of Education
14. Washington Intermediate District; Area Service Center
15. Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Service Agency
16. Wyoming County Office of Education

Still other titles for the middle echelon agency are currently under consideration in several states. Included among these are Area Center for Cooperative Educational Services, Flexible Intermediate Unit, Regional Educational Service Agency, Supervisory Union, Area Educational District, and Educational Leadership Center.

The multiplicity of titles attached to the middle echelon agency makes precise definition of the intermediate unit extremely difficult. Also contributing to difficulty of terminology is the widespread tendency to use the words intermediate and county in the same context. Although this usage was much more obvious in the earlier writings, the more recent literature is not completely devoid of such references. One recent writer, in particular, displayed a marked tendency to envision the intermediate unit only as a single-county entity. An additional complicating factor is that the term county school system is used in other sections of this report when referring to the middle echelon in Iowa. The county school system is a legally specified term in Iowa and describes an intermediate agency serving a single county. Also with reference to Iowa, a merged county school system is a legally permissible combination of counties for intermediate unit purposes.

To add to the problem of definition of terms and subsequent description, several states, particularly in the southeastern part of the country, have organized most of their local school districts on a county basis. Other states have a few local school districts which follow this organizational

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<sup>1</sup> Van Miller, The Public Administration of American School Systems (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1965), pp.87-115.

pattern. Generally, states in which most local school districts are coterminous with boundaries of the political county are classified as two-echelon states.

Because of problems of terminology, several terms were defined in Chapter I. In the interest of further clarity, some of these definitions will now be repeated in summary form. Other terms not presented here can be clarified by referring to Chapter I.

### Definitions of Selected Terms

Presented below are definitions of terms frequently used in this chapter.

Intermediate Unit. A multi-county and/or regional agency organized principally to serve local school districts; organized on a regional rather than single-county basis as the middle echelon agency in the three-echelon state system.

In order to emphasize the regional base and the posture of service assumed by this type of middle echelon agency, the term regional educational service agency (RESA) is used interchangeably with the term intermediate unit.

County Intermediate Unit. Sometimes referred to as the office of county superintendent, this is a middle echelon agency encompassing the territory of a single county. The boundaries are coterminous with those of one political county.

County-Unit, Local School District. A local school district which includes all of the area in a single political county; that is the lower echelon in the state school system.

State Education Agency. This is also referred to as the state education department, the state department of education, and the state department of public instruction. The upper-echelon agency in the total state system for public education which is administered by a state superintendent or commissioner of education. It usually has a state board serving as the general educational policy-making body for the state within constitutional and/or statutory limitations.



## Organization of the Chapter

Some of the basic general criteria in evidence in middle echelon structures in various parts of the United States are presented and briefly discussed. Various general organizational and administrative patterns and trends in intermediate operations are considered, and attention is then focused on a listing of middle echelon programs and services. The numerous programs and services to be mentioned have been selected from those currently being provided by operating middle echelon agencies.

A brief consideration of current financial provisions for the support of intermediate operations in several sections of the United States is included. Staffing provisions, procedures, and problems are treated, and the chapter is concluded with consideration of pertinent legislative aspects currently affecting middle echelon agencies.

## II. CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE INTERMEDIATE UNITS

This treatment of various general criteria of intermediate units is primarily concerned with organizational and structural standards. More specific criteria for the establishment of various special intermediate programs and services are not within the scope of this consideration.

One research study outlined four factors or criteria to be considered in the establishment of any middle echelon educational agency. These generally applicable criteria are basic to intermediate organization and are the four standards around which this treatment will be structured. They are:

1. Minimum student population
2. Number and kinds of local basic administrative districts included
3. Area and recommended travel distances to the intermediate administrative center
4. Financial base<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Phil A. Cook, "A Proposal for the Intermediate Unit of Educational Organization in Kansas" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1962).

In reference to the middle echelon agency's role in education, another researcher singled out two of these criteria as most important. He concluded that the role of the intermediate school district is determined largely by the pupil enrollment and the number and character of the local school districts which comprise it. The same writer suggested that several other factors were also worthy of consideration. These include:

1. The social unity of the intermediate district.
2. Topography
3. Trade and service areas
4. Roads and highways
5. Climate
6. The location of the population within the district
7. The demand for services placed upon the intermediate unit by the state educational agency.<sup>1</sup>

In proposing a plan for the organization of an intermediate district structure in Oregon, Sabin developed and utilized a detailed set of criteria. Each criterion was developed from the literature relating to the intermediate school district and was submitted for validation to a jury of eight "authorities" in school administration and district organization. The twelve criteria, each of which would seem to have some applicability to the organization of an intermediate district, are:

1. The functions, organization, and financing of the intermediate school district should be defined clearly and specified in the state law. The law should provide a sound basis for the relationship between the intermediate school district and local school districts, the state department of education, and other governmental units or agencies.
2. The functions, organization, and financing of the intermediate school district, as defined and specified in state law, should be sufficiently flexible to allow adaptation to changing educational conditions and needs.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert C. Sabin, "A Survey of the Need for an Intermediate School District in Oregon with Implications for Its Future Development" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, Eugene, 1965), pp. 414-415.

3. The principal function of the intermediate school district should be to help the state and local districts provide equal and complete educational opportunity for all children in the intermediate district. . .
4. The basic orientation (responsibility) of the intermediate school district should be to the local districts in the intermediate district area. The service function should be strongly emphasized.
5. The organizational structure of the intermediate school district should provide for: (1) an elected lay board of education, (2) a qualified intermediate district administrator (holding the highest public school administrator's credential required in the state) who is appointed by the lay board, and (3) a qualified staff appointed by the lay board upon the recommendation of the intermediate district superintendents.
6. All of the local school districts in the state should be included in some intermediate school district.
7. An intermediate school district should serve no fewer than five constituent local districts operating as separate administrative units and it may serve districts in more than one county.
8. Financial support for the general program of the intermediate school district should be provided partially by the state and partially by the intermediate school district. Services which are not provided generally to all districts should be available on a contract basis to school districts desiring them.
9. Provisions should be made whereby local school districts may contract some services from the intermediate school district, and an intermediate school district may contract services from a local district or another intermediate district.
10. The intermediate school district board of education should be empowered by law to determine its own budget and to levy taxes. The intermediate school district should be fiscally independent and its budget subject to review only by the voters of the district.
11. The intermediate school district, if necessary, should make available such services as the following to

local districts to assist them in providing a comprehensive educational program for all children or adults within the area of the intermediate school district: (1) education of exceptional children (handicapped and gifted), (2) audio-visual, (3) library, (4) guidance and attendance, (5) curriculum development and consultant service, (6) advisory services in school administration and business, (7) health, (8) supervision of instruction, (9) vocational and adult education, (10) research, (11) cooperative purchasing, (12) transportation, (13) educational television, and (14) community college education.

12. A. The intermediate school district should comprise an area:
  - a. laid out on socio-economic lines to include a group of local districts ( a multiple community area in which people have some common interest) that may be readily brought together for the extension of educational program. . .
  - b. sufficiently large so as to present a real challenge to educational leadership. . .
- B. The minimum, optimum and maximum number of pupils enrolled, number of teachers, total population, and area in square miles necessary for an adequate intermediate school district should be as follows:
  - a. Pupil enrollment in grades 1 to 12  
  
Minimum -- 4,000  
Optimum -- 15,000 to 25,000  
Maximum -- No limit . . .
  - b. Teachers employed by districts included in the intermediate school district  
  
Minimum -- 150  
Optimum -- 600 to 1,000  
Maximum -- No limit . . .
  - c. Total population  
  
Minimum -- 16,000  
Optimum -- 60,000 to 100,000  
Maximum -- No limit. . .



d. Area in square miles

Minimum -- 500  
Optimum -- 2,000 to 5,000  
Maximum -- 12,000<sup>1</sup>

Other writers have offered both similar and differing standards for some of the criteria set forth by Sabin. Reller, for example, felt that the intermediate unit should serve approximately ten local school districts. On the question of total population of the geographic area included in the intermediate district, he considered 75,000 to 100,000 as minimal.<sup>2</sup> As noted in Chapter II, a general recommendation in Illinois called for an intermediate structure extending to "reasonable" geographic limits in sparsely settled areas. Specifically for areas of greater density, a student population of 100,000, or a general population of approximately 500,000, was considered feasible.<sup>3</sup>

Referring only to the Midwest, McLure had earlier insisted that an adequate intermediate unit would require a student population of at least 5,000, except where population is sparse. For the sparsely populated regions, he believed the total area served by the intermediate office should not exceed 400 to 600 square miles.<sup>4</sup> In 1957 a minimum pupil population of 10,000 was proposed for an optimum intermediate service program in the state of Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup> An Iowa study also cited 10,000 as the minimal pupil population figure.<sup>6</sup> Possible geographic limitations in sparsely

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 421-426.

<sup>2</sup>T. L. Reller, "Characteristics of a Desirable Intermediate Unit," American School Board Journal, Vol. 139 (August, 1954), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>The Task Force on Education, Education for the Future of Illinois (Springfield: State of Illinois, 1966), p. 180.

<sup>4</sup>William P. McLure, The Intermediate Administrative School District in the United States (Urbana: Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, University of Illinois, 1956), p. 156.

<sup>5</sup>Russell T. Gregg and George E. Watson, The County Superintendency in Wisconsin (Madison: The School of Education, University of Wisconsin, 1957), pp. 272-274.

<sup>6</sup>Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, Effective Intermediate Units in Iowa (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1960), p. 54.

populated areas of Iowa were recognized, however. It was stated that if too large an area is included in an intermediate unit, it "tends to make it more difficult to maintain channels of communication, and the sociological community ties tend to be weakened."<sup>1</sup> These writers believed that six to twelve local school districts should be included in a single intermediate district. For Iowa in 1960, the year that the study was completed, this would have meant, at a minimum, the combination of three or four counties.<sup>2</sup>

Standards for the pupil population criterion for prospective middle echelon agencies in Texas were stated in somewhat different form. A multi-county approach to intermediate organization was proposed, but classroom teacher units were used as a standard. The recommendation indicated that the maximum size for a Texas intermediate unit ought to include from 66 to 90 classroom teacher units except in regions of extreme population sparsity.<sup>3</sup>

Petty had earlier observed that an intermediate district embracing several counties was needed in Texas. He postulated that the administrative cost of a multi-county agency would be "reasonably," and such a unit could furnish a "maximum" offering of services.<sup>4</sup>

In 1946, Butterworth had dealt with desirable size characteristics for an intermediate unit. In general terms he noted that an intermediate agency of desirable size would encompass:

1. An area with sufficient pupils so that present and future educational services can be provided.
2. An area sufficiently large to provide challenging opportunities for educational leadership.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Texas Association of County Superintendents, The County Superintendency in Texas (Austin, Texas: The Association of County Superintendents, 1954), p. ii.

<sup>4</sup>Paul V. Petty, "The Intermediate School Administrative Unit: A Study of Its Applicability to Texas" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas, Austin, 1950), pp. 402-403.

3. An area sufficiently compact and cohesive for citizens to feel a keen sense of responsibility for the educational program provided.<sup>1</sup>

A few of the more recent recommendations for pupil populations within a single intermediate district were summarized by Inman. His data, with one addition as indicated, are shown in Table 7. Recommended pupil enrollments to be included in a single intermediate district range from Michigan's minimal 5,000 to a suggested 125,000 in New York.<sup>2</sup> Revisions of earlier recommendation, for example Wisconsin's change from 10,000 to 25,000, are apparent. Current efforts in Michigan to raise the 5,000 student minimum, reduce the total number of intermediate districts in the state from 60 to 30, and establish a 100,000 population maximum for intermediate districts in urban complexes should be acknowledged.<sup>3</sup>

Several qualifications regarding the intermediate district size usually accompany enrollment criteria. These qualifications include a maximum driving time of one hour from the intermediate office to any local district attendance center in the intermediate corporation, a maximum radius of 50 to 60 miles, and an optimum intermediate district area based on the natural socio-economic community.

One recent recommendation of the minimal pupil population criterion within an intermediate unit was based on "average daily membership." It was suggested that, "the constituency of the center (intermediate district) should be made up of a school population of at least 50,000 ADM in order that economic justification can be found for the maintenance of a reasonably well articulated program mix."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Julian E. Butterworth, Improving Educational Opportunity in Rural Areas, Bulletin No. 1322, (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1946), pp. 84-85.

<sup>2</sup> William Inman, "Size and School District Reorganization: A Review of the Literature," Preliminary Report, Master Plan, Ohio School District Reorganization Project (Columbus: State Department of Education, 1966), p. 25 (mimeographed).

<sup>3</sup> William J. Emerson, "The Intermediate School District, Middle Echelon of a Three-Echelon State System of Schools," Journal on State School Systems Development, Vol. 1, Number 1 (Spring, 1967), p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, Regional Educational Service Agency Prototypes, Optional Statutory Arrangements, and Suggestions for Implementation, (Washington: National Education Association, January, 1967), p. 76.

TABLE 7

RECOMMENDED ENROLLMENT SIZE OF INTERMEDIATE UNITS:  
SELECTED STATES<sup>1</sup>

State	Year	Recommendation
Michigan	1962	5,000 minimum
Nebraska	1965	10,000 minimum
New York	1962	125,000 optimum
Pennsylvania	1966	100,000 minimum
Washington	1965	20,000 minimum
Wisconsin	1965	25,000 minimum
Ohio <sup>2</sup>	1966	35,000 minimum to (rural) 75,000 minimum (urban)

<sup>1</sup> William Inman, "Size and School District Reorganization: A Review of the Literature," Preliminary Report, Master Plan, Ohio School District Reorganization Project (Columbus: State Department of Education, 1966), p. 25 (mimeographed).

<sup>2</sup> A Report by the Project Staff, A Master Plan for School District Reorganization in Ohio (Columbus: The State Department of Education, 1966), p. 128.



It appears that modern standards for the total area embraced by the middle echelon district do not emphasize square miles to the degree that was once true. Improved roads in many sections of the United States appear to be the principal reason for the gradual abandonment of this criterion. The emphasis now appears to be based on physical accessibility. There is, therefore, increasing evidence of basic criteria stressing total driving time and broad natural socio-economic community boundaries. Problems of effective intermediate district organization in sparsely populated regions remain matters of serious concern, however.

The recent trend in development of standards for the organization of adequate intermediate districts has led to more general criteria, as exemplified by some of the previously discussed criteria offered by Sabin.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, there is growing recognition that conditions vary in different areas of the United States and even in specific areas of a single state. Such differences are compounded by the diverse philosophies upon which the intermediate operation is based in the many states. The variations in the way the middle echelon is conceived within the framework of the total three-level state system also add to the overall differences from state to state.

Rhodes, in 1963, emphasized the necessity for these differences in various intermediate structures and operations. He pointed out that there is probably no "best" single design or operational framework for all intermediate units. He noted the need for the middle echelon agency to be designed as an integral part of the total state structure and concluded that since state structures differ, intermediate organization and operation must also vary, both within and among states.<sup>2</sup>

Although he emphasized the need for intermediate variation and organizational flexibility, Rhodes believed that it was possible to identify certain features characteristic of good intermediate operations. He therefore suggested several features which, in reality, form the basis for a set of general criteria which are summarized below.

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<sup>1</sup>Sabin dissertation, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Alvin E. Rhodes (ed.), National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, *Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units*, (Washington: National Education Association, 1963), p. 9.

1. An adequate service area. This service area should encompass a sufficient population to permit the employment of specialized service personnel. The author cautioned, however, that in an area of extreme population sparsity, meeting this standard could result in the extension of boundaries to a point where there would be a lack of harmony. Conflict with other important characteristics of good intermediate units might then become apparent. The writer stated, further, that the service area should be sufficiently limited in size to facilitate travel and communication. The local school districts comprising the service area should have enough interest in common to become a cooperative working group.

2. A responsible governing body. According to Rhodes, the emphasis should be given to organization of the intermediate unit as a local agency rather than as an extension of the state education authority. Thus, a representative board of lay citizens was recommended.

3. A competent administrator and staff. A trained school administrator prepared to handle educational planning, financial operations, and all other aspects of public school administration must be provided. Other staff members to carry out the special service programs must also be well prepared professional people.

4. Adequate financial support. This support should be as definite and reliable as are the resources of the local districts and the state agency.

5. An appropriate and effective service program. Intermediate agency service programs should vary greatly from area to area and state to state. Program flexibility is essential and all programs undertaken should be adapted to the needs of the service area.

6. An emphasis upon local determination. According to Rhodes, the intermediate unit should not direct local school districts or determine local district policies. Instead, the effective middle echelon agency recognizes its responsibilities in articulation, coordination, and supplementation.<sup>1</sup>

The criteria developed by California's "Committee of Ten" are illustrative of the tendency toward general standards and clearly evolved from the "characteristics of a good intermediate unit" just presented. These criteria, enumerated without additional explanation, are:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-13.

1. To provide equality of educational opportunity, intermediate units must be extensive enough to offer services needed by the local district which is unable to meet adequately the needs of its children because of (1) sparsity of population, (2) impoverishment, (3) large concentrations of population with culturally deprived children, or (4) "other fundamental constraint."

2. Such factors as (1) distance, (2) topography, (3) road patterns, (4) density of population, (5) climate, (6) occupational diversity, (7) ethnic composition of the population, (8) social diversity, (9) social unity, and (10) economic resources should be taken into account in proposing intermediate units.

3. The intermediate unit should be small enough to facilitate (1) communication, (2) coordination, and (3) sensitivity to local community differences.

4. The intermediate unit should be organized in such a way that it can raise the level of competence of its staff to meet the higher qualities in leadership which will be required as larger basic administrative units are created through population growth and school district reorganization.

5. The intermediate unit should be related to other governmental structures of the state.<sup>1</sup>

The criteria discussed in this section will provide the framework for the remaining section in this chapter concerning a descriptive study of the intermediate unit of school administration.

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<sup>1</sup> California Association of County Superintendents of Schools and County Boards of Education Section of California School Boards Association, "The Committee of Ten," The Future Role and Function, Size, Structure, and Organization of the Intermediate Unit in California (September, 1966), pp. 1-62.

### III. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Although specific as well as general criteria have been presented, it is emphasized that each intermediate unit is unique and distinctive. One characteristic which illustrates this point relates to the organization and administration of intermediate units. It is also to be recalled that one writer emphasized that there is no "best" single design or "best" operational framework for all intermediate units.<sup>1</sup> However, specific criteria do provide at least minimal standards for the organization of intermediate service agencies, and general criteria can be especially valuable in furnishing guidelines with applicability to many situations.

This description of organizational and administrative characteristics will be limited to the area served by the intermediate unit, characteristics of the governing board, characteristics of the intermediate officer, and selection of the chief administrator.

#### Area Served

One of the more common standards relates to both general and specific statements about the area to be included in the intermediate district. The criteria concerning the area to be included in an intermediate unit is illustrative of a broad guideline which has some degree of appropriateness in many situations. For example, most authorities seem to agree that a multi-county or regional base for the middle-echelon agency is dictated by modern needs and conditions. Further, agreement is apparent that the boundaries of the intermediate unit should be coterminous with logical combinations of local school districts. It is generally recognized that there is no necessity for these boundaries to be related to the traditional political counties.

Generally stated, the size criterion is concerned with both total geographic area and population within the service district. Thus, area standards will usually state that the territory embraced by the intermediate district should be sufficient (1) to provide challenging opportunities for educational leadership, (2) to have well-prepared professional personnel to carry out a variety of needed special service programs, and (3) to provide a maximum offering of programs and services so that present and future needs can be met. Writers hasten to point out that the intermediate constituency should not cover an excessively large area in terms of geographic

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<sup>1</sup> Rhodes (ed.), Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units, op.cit., p. 9.



region and/or population. Accessibility to services is considered an important factor, and the unit must be small enough for adequate communication, coordination, and sensitivity to specific local needs. Thus, "reasonable limits," as described in an Illinois report,<sup>1</sup> are often included in the general standards concerning organization and administration.

It is apparent that the various factors of the size criterion are important in the formation of intermediate districts. An area sufficiently large in terms of resources and people is a requisite for quality and effectiveness of operation. However, "reasonable limits" and extenuating factors, such as a large geographic area or lack of population, cannot be overlooked. Therefore, a fundamental issue is readily apparent. Adequacy of the total area, or proper provisions to overcome district structural limitations, must be met if the potential for operational efficiency is to be assumed.

On the basis of a number of visitations to intermediate units in all parts of the county the project staff noted that programs and services of high quality existed under varying size conditions. In some instances outstanding programs were noted under conditions adhering almost completely to the recommended criteria. In other cases quality programs were evident even though there were many serious structural limitations present. In the latter circumstances, it was felt that excellent leadership and competent personnel overcame the numerous structural handicaps under which the programs operated.

### The Governing Body

A commonly expressed criterion for intermediate unit organization is provision for a popularly elected lay body. A point of emphasis is that a representative board of lay citizens provides a responsible governing body. It is frequently stressed that the intermediate unit governing board should be considered an extension of the philosophy of local control of public education. The scope of local control is merely broadened to a regional, area, or multi-county base.

When the intermediate board of education is seen as an extension of the local concept, the middle echelon agency is viewed as a protector of, rather than a replacement for, the traditional local control of education. In addition, a representative and responsible intermediate governing body leads to desired perpetuation of the local school district's right of self-determination. The intermediate board of directors is not considered to be a "superboard." Therefore, no implications of a supraordinate-

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<sup>1</sup>The Task Force on Education, op.cit., p. 180.

subordinate relationship exist, and the local district is not perceived as a lower-level agency. According to this view, it is recognized that the intermediate unit does not direct or determine local school district policies. Instead, as indicated by one writer, the intermediate unit accepts its responsibilities for articulation, coordination, and supplementation.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to pointing out the desirability of popular election of the intermediate board, several writers have insisted that election be on an at-large basis. Director districts are not considered desirable, even though the most staunch advocates of local control generally hold the opposite view.

Extensive use of advisory committees is usually deemed essential to successful intermediate unit administration. Authorities tend to agree that in most circumstances advisory committees should be named from the membership of the boards of directors of the local school districts served. The usual recommendations for boards of education to serve as policy-making bodies and evaluators of the institution's programs are customarily applied to the intermediate district board of directors.

Several intermediate districts visited by the project staff did not have popularly elected governing boards. For example, in California, county intermediate unit board members are appointed in at least five counties, while in Pennsylvania intermediate directors must be chosen from among local board members. In Michigan, representatives of local school boards generally name the intermediate board, but there are some optional provisions for election-at-large. In a state such as New Jersey, the official sometimes referred to as "the county superintendent of schools" works directly with several special-purpose boards. Until recently Washington has not had a middle echelon governing body. County committees have traditionally performed some board functions particularly in matters concerned with school district reorganization. Within the past two years, boards have been elected in five newly organized intermediate districts.

One source reported that in fifteen of twenty-seven states having intermediate units, boards of education are the governing body of the intermediate district. In eleven states the legal responsibility rests entirely with the county superintendent of schools. New Jersey was cited as a special case with no intermediate board in the usual sense.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rhodes (ed.), op.cit., pp. 9-13.

<sup>2</sup> Roald F. Campbell, Luvern L. Cunningham, and Roderick F. McPhee, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1965), p. 114.

In summary, it can be said the ideal intermediate unit's governing board should be a popularly elected board of education. However, intermediate units in which this criterion was not met were visited by the project staff. Several outstanding programs and/or services were observed.

### The Intermediate Unit Superintendent

Among the previously discussed general criteria was a statement calling for a qualified intermediate district superintendent, holding the highest public school administrative credential required in the state, appointed by a lay board.<sup>1</sup> Standards concerned with the size of the intermediate district stated that the area should be sufficiently large to provide challenging opportunities for educational leadership.<sup>2</sup> The importance of leadership, as personified by the chief administrator, has thus been recognized as has the probability that such leadership is more likely to come from a well qualified superintendent selected by the intermediate board of education.

Various authors have noted that the intermediate superintendent must be an individual with the professional qualifications and competence to earn recognition from administrators and personnel in the local school districts served.

Morphet, Johns, and Reller reported in 1967 that in three-echelon states, eighteen states have a system of popular election of the intermediate unit superintendent.<sup>3</sup> Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee cited fifteen states in which this situation exists.<sup>4</sup> These data shown in Table 8, are based upon information developed by Campbell, Cunningham and McPhee in 1965,<sup>5</sup> but has been modified to include some known legislative changes. As previously reported, in fifteen of twenty-seven states intermediate boards of education serve as the governing body, while in eleven states legal responsibility for governance rests solely with the intermediate unit's chief admin-

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<sup>1</sup>Sabin dissertation, op.cit., p. 421.

<sup>2</sup>Butterworth, Improving Educational Opportunity in Rural Areas, op.cit., p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>Edgar L. Morphet, Roe L. Johns, and Theodore L. Reller, Educational Organization and Administration, Second Edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 227.

<sup>4</sup>Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, loc.cit.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

TABLE 8

ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN TWENTY-SEVEN OF  
THE STATES CLASSIFIED AS THREE-ECHELON STATES

State	Status of Intermediate Board	Selection of Intermediate Superintendent
Arizona	None	Elected
Arkansas	Elected board	Appointed
California	Elected board	Elected
Colorado*	None	Elected
Illinois	Elected board	Elected
Indiana**	Elected board	Appointed
Iowa	Elected board	Appointed
Kansas**	None	Elected
Michigan	Elected board	Appointed
Minnesota**	None	Elected
Mississippi**	Elected board	Elected
Missouri**	Elected board	Elected
Montana	None	Elected
Nebraska***	Elected board	Appointed
New Jersey	None	Appointed
New York	Elected board	Appointed
North Dakota	None	Elected
Ohio	Elected board	Appointed
Oklahoma	None	Elected
Oregon	Elected board	Appointed
Pennsylvania	Elected board	Appointed
South Carolina	Appointed board	Elected
South Dakota	Elected board	Elected
Texas	Elected board	Elected
Washington****	None	Elected
Wisconsin	Elected board	Appointed
Wyoming	None	Elected

27 States:

Elected Board- - 16 States  
 Appointed Board - - 1 State  
 Governing Board - - 10 States  
 Elected Chief Administrator - - 16 States  
 Appointed Chief Administrator - - 11 States



TABLE 8 (Continued)

State	Status of Intermediate Board	Selection of Intermediate Superintendent
*	County intermediate unit is gradually being eliminated in Colorado and is being replaced, to an extent, by voluntary cooperative service agencies composed of local school districts.	
**	The middle echelon agency is gradually being eliminated in Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Missouri.	
***	Table describes new intermediate structure in Nebraska, although several counties have retained the office of county superintendent in addition to membership in the new service units.	
****	Five new intermediate districts have elected boards.	

istrative officer. In Table 8, these statistics vary slightly to reflect recent legislative enactments in several states. Currently, seventeen of the twenty-seven states have intermediate boards, and legal responsibility rests solely with the superintendent in ten states.

Reference to Table 8 demonstrates that of sixteen states with popularly elected superintendents, six also name intermediate board members at popular elections. Using the earlier statistics, Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee made an interesting comment about this situation. They noted that the popularly elected intermediate superintendents presumably serve as administrators for popularly elected intermediate boards. These writers believed that in actual practice boards in such states would have no way of really holding the superintendent responsible.<sup>1</sup>

The previously described qualifying factors should be kept in mind in the interpretation of Table 8. As mentioned, California has appointive county intermediate boards in some counties; Pennsylvania selects intermediate board members from the membership of the local boards of education; Michigan, in general, uses a representative assembly from local boards; Washington, although having only five county or intermediate boards, does utilize a county wide district reorganization committee. The New Jersey "county superintendent" works directly with several popularly elected special purpose boards. Although New Jersey is included among intermediate unit states, it does not really have a middle echelon agency. The "county superintendent" is appointed by the state commission of education, and the county office is, in reality, a regional branch of the state education department.

Because of the complexities of some state organizations for public instruction and due to diverse recent developments, several additional points should be noted in considering the organization of intermediate unit boards and the chief administrative officer of these units:

1. Iowa has more county boards than county intermediate superintendents. Several superintendents serve two or more counties and report to two or more county boards of education. Other county school systems have actually merged under provisions of permissive legislation. Consequently, the chief administrator of a merged county school system is also a multi-county superintendent but is responsible to a single board.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Ibid., p. 114.

2. The county school office in Minnesota and Missouri is apparently being phased out of existence. Permissive legislation in both states has already led to elimination of the office in many counties. In Minnesota, for example, the county superintendency has been abandoned in at least 41 counties.

3. The intermediate office is also being abolished gradually in Mississippi and Indiana. In Mississippi 71 of the 82 counties have eliminated the middle echelon agency. In Indiana, 70<sup>1</sup> counties of the state's total of 93 have abandoned the intermediate unit.

4. South Carolina's governance of public education is extremely complex. In twenty-four of the forty-six counties there is only one local school district. Thirty-five county boards of education are appointed by a county legislative delegation, and 35 county superintendents are popularly elected.

5. Boards for New York's Cooperative Educational Service Agencies are elected by representatives of local school districts.

6. In Texas, intermediate boards are elected in 148 of the 254 counties and are appointed in four counties. Four Texas counties have only one basic administrative unit.<sup>2</sup>

7. Kansas is also phasing out the intermediate agency. Most of the pertinent school legislation of the past several years does not even mention the county intermediate superintendent.

8. Colorado retains the county intermediate structure in some counties. A constitutional amendment authorizes counties to submit the question of abolition of the county education office to the voters at any general election.<sup>3</sup> By this means, the office of county superintendent has been voted out of existence in 35 of Colorado's 63 counties.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles O. Fitzwater, "Patterns and Trends in State School System Development," Journal on State School Systems Development, Vol.1, No. 1 (Spring, 1967), pp. 5-32.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op.cit., p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley A. Leftwich, "Colorado's Story on School Reorganization and Intermediate Unit," An Address quoted from Conference Proceedings, op.cit., p. 111.

The 1965 Colorado Boards of Cooperative Service Act made provision for a type of middle echelon agency as a replacement for the county intermediate unit. The legislation permits the establishment of voluntary service units composed of contracting local districts. A board of directors for the service agency is elected from the membership of the cooperating local districts. Emphasis to date seems to have centered around (1) special education services, (2) guidance and counseling, (3) accounting and reporting, (4) vocational-technical education, (5) audio-visual materials centers and services, (6) child care centers, and (7) cooperative purchasing.<sup>1</sup>

9. As noted earlier, Nebraska also has new legislation establishing regional educational service agencies. The governing body is an elected board, but, in effect, each county is a director district. The traditional county office has not been eliminated in Nebraska.

10. Recent legislative mandate in Wisconsin abolished the county superintendency. In its place are nineteen cooperative service agencies with directors elected from local school boards. The board of directors appoints the chief administrative officer.

#### Selection of the Chief Administrator

The project staff visited several intermediate units in which the superintendent was named to his position by means of a popular election. Some outstanding programs and services were observed in these districts, so generalization as to relationship between quality and method of chief administrator selection is difficult. However, most authorities in the field of educational administration agree that the appointive method of selection is vastly superior to the elective method.

Morphet, Johns, and Reller clearly stated the point of view of these authorities:

. . . the elective superintendent all too often is not particularly well qualified professionally to develop the kind of intermediate unit program needed under modern conditions. The concept that election by popular vote is a satisfactory method of selecting the highly competent professional leader needed to provide services for reasonably well-organized school districts, is indefensible.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Morphet, Johns, and Reller, op.cit., p. 279.



Appointment of the superintendent by the board is usually included among the standard criteria of the organization of intermediate units. Among the many possible examples of such a criterion was one offered in the 1950 yearbook of the National Education Association Department of Rural Education. It was stressed that the intermediate unit superintendent should be appointed by the intermediate board because it is this board to whom he is responsible as the chief executive officer.<sup>1</sup>

As previously indicated, it is generally assumed that board appointment of the intermediate superintendent is superior to selection by the electorate. This assumption is so widespread that its acceptance is rarely questioned. In addition to the previously cited points, additional reasons for the assumed superiority of the appointive method are customarily stated in the following terms:

1. The intermediate board is much more capable of investigating and evaluating qualifications of candidates than is the voting public.
2. Conflicts of responsibility and authority are more likely when the board and the superintendent are both elected by popular vote.
3. The appointed superintendent is freer to exercise leadership because he need not fear the political consequences.
4. There is a broader area from which to select an appointive superintendent than there would be in the case of one who is popularly elected.<sup>2</sup>

The members of the project staff concur with those who advocate appointment rather than popular election. All of the cited reasons for this preference seem to be appropriate, and many others could be added. For example:

1. Qualifications for filing for election to the office are often minimal. The effective intermediate operation demands higher caliber leadership than minimal qualifications frequently provide.

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<sup>1</sup>National Education Association. Department of Rural Education, The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States, A Yearbook prepared by the Department of Rural Education (Washington: National Education Association, 1950).

<sup>2</sup>A Report of the Alabama Educational Survey Commission, Public Education in Alabama (Washington: American Council on Education, 1945).

2. Due to the brevity of the term in office, stability and continuity of leadership is made difficult in the elective situation.

3. Salary limitations for elective officials often apply to the elected superintendent. Not only is his salary typically low, but salaries of other intermediate personnel tend to be even lower.

4. Election to office may be based on personal appeal and "the right connections and affiliations" rather than on professional qualifications.

5. The exceptionally well qualified educational administrator may be reluctant to subject himself to the process of public election to office.

6. The politically expedient course of action may be allowed to take precedence over the educational functions of the position.

7. Because of the political connotations the intermediate office may frequently be held in low esteem by local district administrators and staff. Potential for quality leadership and innovative practices is thus drastically reduced.

Despite the fact that there is general agreement that the intermediate superintendent should be appointed by the board rather than popularly elected, a review of the literature uncovered very little empirical evidence to support this point of view. Only two really systematic research efforts concerned with the selection question were identified, and the more recent of the two studies was conducted 35 years ago. Both research projects were designed to ascertain whether the method of selection of the chief administrator was related to the particular official's professional performance. Although neither study is recent or focused on the emerging regional educational service agency administrator under consideration, both were germane to the question of selection.

In 1929, Tink endeavored to determine if the method used to select the county intermediate superintendent in four states had any bearing on quality of performance in office. Data were gathered in Alabama, Florida, Maryland, and North Carolina. The researcher concluded that the appointive method was indeed superior to selection by means of popular election. His principal conclusion was based upon four significant findings. In each of the states some counties appointed the superintendent while others used the elective process. Tink found that in counties using the appointive method, the chief administrator, when compared to his elected colleague, was:

1. Better trained and had more experience in educational administration.
2. Retained longer in office.
3. More highly motivated for continued professional growth.
4. Consistently providing better educational service from the county office.<sup>1</sup>

Butterworth, in a 1931-32 national study of the county superintendency, found evidence to support Tink's contentions. When compared to those who had been elected to office, the appointed county superintendents' group had a larger percentage of persons with (1) a longer period of training, (2) more administrative experience, (3) longer experience as a county superintendent, and (4) a higher salary. The appointed group also had a higher percentage of individuals who held an administrative position at the time of appointment to a county superintendency. A smaller percentage of the appointed superintendents held a noneducational position when first selected as county superintendents.<sup>2</sup>

Butterworth, despite his evidence, refused to accept a hypothesis that the selection method alone could be regarded as the determinant of a superintendent's professional status.<sup>3</sup> His caution appears well advised. However, the limited empirical findings, consensus of authorities, and personal observations tend to support at least a subjective conclusion that the intermediate superintendent should be appointed by a board of education.

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<sup>1</sup> E. L. Tink, Certain Phases of County Educational Organization (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929).

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Butterworth, The County Superintendent in the United States (Washington: U.S. Office of Education, Bulletin No. 6, 1932).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

#### IV. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Among the generally accepted standards for intermediate unit operation is the statement that "the basic orientation (responsibility) of the intermediate school district should be to the local districts in the intermediate district area."<sup>1</sup> Acceptance of this criterion is tantamount to acceptance of the idea that the intermediate unit's primary emphasis should be service to local school districts. Stated in slightly different terms, some writers have noted that the intermediate unit's responsibility should be generally limited to those functions desired by local school districts. The intermediate agency is seen as a creature of local school districts.<sup>2</sup> The middle echelon operation will be viewed in this section as a service-oriented unit with the concept of functions centered upon those favored by local districts, expanded to include those needed by local districts and prescribed by the state-level agency in the three-echelon system.

A general consideration of existing intermediate unit programs and services is that one of the basic middle echelon functions is assistance in providing equal and complete educational opportunity for all children in the intermediate district. It therefore becomes obvious that in most cases an area approach, such as a multi-county organization, is necessary if the intermediate unit is to provide the maximum offerings of services needed to attain the idealistic goal of equal opportunity for all children. The intermediate unit must offer comprehensive services if it is to equalize educational opportunities in the area served.

According to the report of the California's "Committee of Ten," the intermediate office must assume the responsibility for many services required by local districts, which cannot adequately meet their needs because of (1) sparsity of population, (2) impoverishment, (3) large concentrations of population with culturally deprived children, or (4) "other fundamental constraint."

Middle echelon programs and/or services do and of necessity should vary greatly from area to area and state to state. Flexibility is essential and all programs undertaken should be adapted to specific needs of the service area. Consequently, in each state and in specific areas of individual states, a determination and clarification of intermediate role and function is required. As suggested for Michigan, clarification of the nature and function of an intermediate administrative school unit will require the

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<sup>1</sup> Sabin, op.cit., p. 421.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op.cit., p. 112.



testing of theory which has been developed largely from practice in other states.<sup>1</sup> It is at this point, then, that diverse local needs should receive prime consideration.

In order to insure the flexibility which is a mark of an effective and responsive intermediate service operation, flexible characteristics must be built into the system. Thus, both in structure and functions the effective intermediate unit must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing educational needs. As local districts become larger through reorganization, unification, or population increases, their service needs change. The intermediate agency should be flexible enough to discontinue services and add others which changing conditions necessitate.

### Direct vs. Indirect Services

Two basic philosophical positions concerning services are apparent from personal visitations and additional analyses of programs, services, and organizational structure of many intermediate units. These philosophical positions are indicative of divergent points of view in respect to the intermediate unit's "posture of service." It cannot be stated accurately that the two positions are diametrically opposed, however. Both philosophies could be incorporated into a single structure.

Briefly stated, some intermediate units are committed to providing direct programs and services to children. Other middle echelon service units are structured to provide programs and services directly to school districts. Intermediate offices subscribing to the latter point of view stress that the individual child thus becomes the indirect beneficiary of a service to the school district.

The direct and indirect services dichotomy was indeed obvious to the project staff when studying selected intermediate operations. Such philosophical differences were very apparent when an intermediate office in one state was considered in relation to the same type of office in another state. Also, differences were equally discernible within a single state and even within a single metropolitan complex. By way of illustration, in one state, Michigan, one intermediate unit observed was oriented toward the concept of direct services to students, while its neighboring district was almost exclusively providing services on an indirect basis. Both are

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<sup>1</sup>Harlan D. Beem, "A Study of the Intermediate Unit of School Administration in Michigan" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1957), p. 220.

situated near the heart of a large metropolitan area and had contiguous boundaries. One provided clinical services to students, while the other, almost without exception, provided consultative services to its constituent local districts. The former unit maintained numerous remedial and diagnostic clinics, transporting students from local attendance units to clinical centers, usually housed in the intermediate unit's central facility. By way of contrast, the second agency utilized the services of consultants in special education.

It should not be assumed that the illustrative intermediate districts discussed above were committed exclusively to one philosophy as opposed to the other. Each agency offered some services or programs on a direct as well as indirect basis. Thus, the dichotomy is not absolute, although each unit has, in general, followed the path dictated by its basic philosophy.

The importance of the direct and indirect service and program orientations in any consideration of standard criteria for intermediate district establishment, organization, and operation is obvious. It appears that an entirely different set of criteria would be appropriate for a "direct service agency" than would be the case for an intermediate unit operating on a premise that its role should be primarily consultative in nature.

### Current Programs and Services

Modern intermediate unit emphasis is on the service function. The effective intermediate office is, therefore, no longer seen as a clerical, regulatory, or supervisory agency, although such responsibilities may still be included as part of its overall function. Many factors must be taken into account when the role of the middle echelon service agency is considered, and it must be admitted that in many states this role is yet to be determined. Thus, the intermediate unit is still evolving and must continue to do so.

In defining specific intermediate unit functions, local area conditions and needs must also be carefully considered; thus, sensitivity to service and program requirements of the constituency must be built into the intermediate structure.

Also required is a degree of flexibility to allow adaptation to the many changing needs. Such flexibility was apparent in some of the intermediate operations visited while other units appeared to be handicapped by stringent restrictions which prevent change in services and programs. The extreme diversity of programs throughout the county and within specific states indicated, however, that the more effective middle echelon service agencies were at least endeavoring to meet local needs and were willing to make program revisions necessary to meet these changing needs. The process of change was sometimes laborious and it appeared that even the outstanding operations were often slow in making adaptations.

Because of the extreme diversities noted in types of programs and services provided by various intermediate agencies, a general description is difficult. Perhaps the best way to illustrate program diversity and the necessity for adaptive response to changed conditions is to present a list of the multitude of service offerings observed during visitations to intermediate units in various sections of the United States.

Classification of the numerous programs and services is an equally difficult task. Knezevich, in his discussion of "the evolving intermediate unit of school administration," used an outline of the various services with twenty-four main categories.<sup>1</sup> Another classificatory system sees the intermediate service program in terms of broad functional classifications including (1) articulative, (2) coordinative, and (3) supplementary.<sup>2</sup> Still another possible classification was noted in the following three major divisions of one service agency: (1) curricular services, (2) special services, and (3) business services.<sup>3</sup>

The organizational structure for another intermediate district operation specifies directors for the fields of special education, administration, instruction, and data processing. Ranked above these directors in this organization are the special categories of public information, state and federal regulations, and systematic studies (research and development).<sup>4</sup>

Another intermediate unit utilizes the services of five assistant superintendents, each of whom is assigned to a definite, yet broad, area of responsibility. These areas provide hints as to a possible scheme for classification of intermediate programs and services. They are (1) administrative services, (2) supporting services, (3) research and development services, (4) elementary curriculum and instruction services, and (5) secondary curriculum and instruction services.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Education (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1962), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Rhodes (ed.), op. cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> A brochure, "Services" (San Diego, California: San Diego County Department of Education, undated).

<sup>4</sup> Oakland Schools, Staff Manual (Pontiac, Michigan: Oakland County Service Center, 1966-67), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> A brochure, "Educational Services" (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Allegheny County Schools, 1966-67).

With full recognition of the many different possibilities for functional categorization of intermediate unit services and programs, the project staff decided to use a classification scheme based on five broad categories. It is to be noted that much overlap is possible, and that the classification of specific functions must frequently be arbitrary. The categories are (1) administrative and staff personnel services and programs, (2) instructional services and programs, (3) student personnel services and programs, (4) special education services and programs, and (5) research and development services and programs. This classification scheme will be adhered to despite the many difficulties inherent in any attempt at definite categorization of diverse activities.

The following outline indicates the many and varied intermediate programs and services observed during visitations to middle echelon agencies throughout the United States. The list is limited to services currently provided by the intermediate units visited. The number of programs included is indicative of the fine educational services already available and demonstrates the intermediate unit's outstanding potential. Current services being provided are outlined below:

- A. Administrative and Staff Personnel Services and Programs
  - 1. Receiving and apportioning state funds
  - 2. Reporting
  - 3. Accounting
    - a. Receipts, expenditures, and encumbrances
    - b. Attendance
    - c. Perpetual inventories
    - d. Transportation records
  - 4. Approval functions (budgets, contracts, expenditures, transfers, special funds, bus routes and transportation costs, boundary changes, bond referendums and other special elections, bond funding programs, and building plans)
  - 5. Record keeping
    - a. Records of local district budgets, audits, expenditures, contracts, boundary changes, and other official acts of local school boards
    - b. Census taking and school census records
    - c. Non-public school records of enrollments, teachers, buildings, and tax-exempt property.
  - 6. Issuing expenditure warrants on behalf of local districts
  - 7. Preparing local district payrolls and issuing salary warrants
  - 8. Auditing of local district accounts
  - 9. Estimating local revenues
  - 10. Conveying and interpreting state educational agency directives, policies, and recommendations
  - 11. Advising the state educational agency concerning local problems, needs, and desires



12. Leadership in school district reorganizations (legal consultation, development of maps, collection of data, and graphic charts)
  - a. Assisting newly formed districts with organizational and operational problems
  - b. Acting as an appeal agency
13. Assisting with bus inspections and lunch inspections
14. Relating with educational, semi-educational, and other organizations (liaison services for local districts)
15. Providing liaison between school districts and governmental and non-governmental agencies
16. Working with local district administrative and teacher special interest councils
17. Preparing and disseminating publications (periodic bulletins, newsletters, special reports, information summaries, news releases, news clipping files, and annual reports)
18. Operating and administering a cooperative purchasing program
  - a. Standard school supplies (instructional, custodial, maintenance, and lunch)
  - b. Equipment (instructional, custodial, maintenance, buses, lunchroom, and surplus property)
19. Advising local districts regarding purchases and specifications
20. Providing professional personnel services, and non-professional, when applicable
  - a. Certification (studying and interpreting requirements, certificate registration, advising local district personnel regarding certification problems and possibilities, assisting with mechanics of certification applications, notifying teachers of certificate expiration, issuing temporary certificates for non-professional personnel)
  - b. Preparing, issuing, and registering standard form contracts
  - c. Maintaining a substitute teacher pool for local districts
  - d. Assisting with teacher placement (receiving and processing applications, preliminary screening and interviewing, and general referrals to local district employing officials)
  - e. Arranging for physical examinations and registering health certificates
  - f. Making internship arrangements with colleges and universities
  - g. Notifying local personnel of assistantships, fellowships, and in-service opportunities
  - h. Assisting in arranging leaves for local personnel for the purpose of advanced preparation
21. Assisting local districts with building programs
  - a. Long-range study and planning
  - b. Preliminary studies and surveys

- c. Site acquisition
  - d. Architect selection
  - e. Educational specifications
  - f. Basic design concepts
  - g. Legal advice
  - h. Bond retirement schedules
  - i. Plan evaluations
  - j. Building appraisals
- 22. Administering and coordinating joint part-time local districts' employment of personnel
  - 23. Preparing, administering, and coordinating local inter-district service contracts
  - 24. Coordinating pupil transportation systems
  - 25. Consultative and advisory services (legal, federal programs, foundation and other funding agency programs, business management, legislation, transportation, maintenance and custodial, food services, policy development, salary schedules, personnel, educational data processing, budget and finance, public relations, publications, administrative organization, and staff relations)
  - 26. Additional services for non-professional personnel (food service, transportation, business services, custodial, maintenance, secretarial, clerical, instructional aid, library assistant, study hall monitor, special playground supervisor, and crossing guard)
    - a. Consultation and coordination responsibilities in the various areas
    - b. Limited supervisory functions
    - c. Assisting with provisions for in-service training programs (workshops, institutes, short courses, training meetings, and on-the-job training programs)
    - d. Forming special interest associations and clubs
      - (1) Serving in leadership roles in formation and planning
      - (2) Acting as advisers, consultants, coordinators, and resource people
      - (3) Securing the services of outside consultants
    - e. Maintaining a clerical pool for special assistance to local districts
  - 27. Additional responsibilities to local district boards of education
    - a. Providing special consultative services
    - b. Performing liaison functions
    - c. Assisting with selection of chief administrator
    - d. Providing assistance with problems of professional negotiation and collective bargaining
    - e. Working with local boards in various cooperative endeavors

- f. Forming regional associations of local school boards
  - (1) Providing initial leadership
  - (2) Serving as advisers, consultants, coordinators, and resource people
  - (3) Performing secretarial and clerical functions
  - (4) Providing liaison with state and national associations
- g. Assuming in-service training responsibilities (orientation, workshops, services and programs, and short courses)

B. Instructional Services and Programs

- 1. General and limited supervision of instruction
- 2. General curriculum information services
- 3. Special consultative assistance for local district supervisors
- 4. Special consultative assistance for teachers (in-classroom and out-of-classroom consultative activities)
- 5. Employment of outside subject matter and special area consultants
- 6. Program planning with local administrators
- 7. Coordination of instructional activities of other agencies with on-going school programs
- 8. Direct in-service program and developmental responsibilities with certificated professional personnel (consultation and coordination for local, district, regional, and state instructional and curricular activities)
  - a. Responsibilities as resource persons and planners
  - b. Providing "expertise" in specific areas
  - c. Initiation of programs in cooperation with local personnel
  - d. Planning, leadership, coordination, and cooperation in development of courses of study, study guides, and related materials, sometimes including the responsibility for document publication
  - e. Assistance in selection of textbooks, supplementary materials, and other instructional aids
- 9. Additional responsibilities for in-service programs through faculty meetings, demonstrations, workshops, institutes, professional meetings, and individual and group conferences
  - a. Cooperative planning of programs
  - b. Conducting and/or directing programs
  - c. Providing personnel including outside consultants
  - d. Serving as discussion leaders, coordinators, consultants, and resource persons
  - e. Providing continuity from inception and initiation through completion, implementation, evaluation, modification, and follow-up

10. Provisions for audio-visual services including actual operation of instructional materials centers
  - a. Providing for use of specialized equipment on a loan basis
  - b. Providing for loan of various types of instructional materials (special purpose texts and references, supplementary texts, films, film strips, slides, charts, maps, dioramas, models, art prints, records, tapes, and community resource materials)
  - c. Consultation and/or direct services
    - (1) Inventory, review, and appraisal of existing equipment and materials
    - (2) Selection, volume purchasing for local districts, receiving, cataloging, and processing
    - (3) Distribution of equipment and materials
    - (4) Interpretation through consultative and in-service efforts designed to bring about effective utilization and maintenance of equipment and materials (workshops, demonstrations, and technical advice to local school districts)
11. Additional functions of audio-visual and instructional materials centers
  - a. Preparation of materials and/or assistance to teachers in preparation of materials
  - b. Circulation of materials and special equipment (regularly scheduled weekly or bi-weekly deliveries to local district administrative centers or specific attendance units)
  - c. Repair of local district-owned equipment and loan service for temporary replacement of equipment
  - d. Repair of films and other materials
  - e. Arrangements for photographic coverage of local district school events
  - f. Maintenance of an inventory of sample texts, references, and other instructional aids
  - g. Professional library services and materials
12. Services for local school district libraries
  - a. Continuing assistance to local districts in a sustaining and supportive role
  - b. General and specific consultation
  - c. Coordination of local efforts for library improvement
  - d. Interpretation of pertinent federal legislation and assistance in preparation of project proposals
  - e. Guidance and consultation for development of new libraries at the local district level
  - f. Providing direction and assistance for the procurement of information from other libraries and materials centers



- g. Making contractual arrangements with local school districts under provisions of pertinent federal legislation for acquisition of materials
    - (1) Ordering, receiving, and cataloging materials
    - (2) Making charges to local districts for actual costs
- 13. Responsibilities for educational television depending upon area arrangements
- 14. Consultative and production responsibilities in the use of closed circuit television at the local district and/or building level
- 15. Outdoor education programs (day camps or short-term residential camps)
  - a. Academic, conservation and resources, and nature study
  - b. Safety education, recreational programs, and skills programs
- 16. Adult and special secondary programs
  - a. Area vocational-technical schools (secondary and post high school)
  - b. Classes conducted under Area Redevelopment
  - c. Classes conducted under Manpower Development and Training
  - d. Classes conducted under Vocational Education
  - e. Adult basic education programs (basic literacy, reading, subject matter fields, and high school equivalency)
  - f. Vocational rehabilitation
  - g. Skill training for high school dropouts and high school equivalency
  - h. Introduction to work projects
  - i. Work-study programs
  - j. Job Corps and Youth Corps programs
  - k. Distributive Education programs
  - l. Services to senior citizens

#### C. Student Personnel Services and Programs

- 1. Data processing services
  - a. Student grade reporting and class ranking
  - b. Class scheduling
  - c. Test scoring, analysis, and reporting
  - d. Maintenance of guidance records
- 2. Consultative and advisory services in matters of attendance
- 3. Supervision of attendance including case study, analysis, consultation, and follow-up
- 4. Guidance and counseling services (consultative and/or direct services to students)
- 5. Sponsoring, directing, and planning "Career Days"
- 6. Preparation of guidance manuals and guides

7. Visiting teacher programs
8. Health services (consultation and/or direct employment of school nurses)
9. Provisions for school physicians
10. Dental health and hygiene personnel
11. In-service training for student personnel staff specialists
12. Preparation, development, administration, and interpretation of standardized tests
13. Psychological services
14. Psychiatric services

D. Special Education Services and Programs

1. Indirect or direct programs and services for exceptional children (operation of schools and programs, financing special schools and programs operated by local districts, cooperative programming with local districts, supervision of programs operating through a combination of local districts, consultative functions, diagnosis, referral, special class placement, total educational program planning, supervision, evaluation, coordination, in-service programs for teachers, specialists, and administrators, cooperation and coordination with programs of other agencies, advisory and resource functions, miscellaneous direct or indirect services to individual children, program organization and administration, consultation, clinical and therapeutic approaches, providing facilities for local district operation of programs, and direct operation of programs housed in local district facilities)
2. Classes, schools, programs, and services for exceptional children
  - a. Educable mentally handicapped
  - b. Trainable mentally handicapped
  - c. Severely mentally handicapped
  - d. Orthopedically handicapped
  - e. Blind and partially sighted
  - f. Speech defective children
  - g. Deaf and hard of hearing
  - h. Perceptual development for aphasic children
  - i. Adjusted study programs for physically and mentally handicapped, socially and/or emotionally disturbed children
  - j. Various clinical services, therapeutic, and rehabilitation programs
3. Institutionalized children's programs (operated in cooperation with juvenile courts; sometimes housed in retention halls, or in lodges, cottages or residential camps)
4. Operation of hospital schools

5. Additional visiting teacher programs for the homebound child and follow-up activities after hospital discharge
6. Early childhood development centers
  - a. Culturally disadvantaged pre-school children
  - b. Headstart programs
  - c. Socially deprived pre-school children
  - d. Mentally handicapped pre-school children
  - e. Physically handicapped pre-school children
7. Operation or coordination of programs for the gifted child
8. Consultative services for the gifted child (direct or indirect)
9. Additional health services for the handicapped child
10. Additional psychological services (direct to child or indirect to school district special or general personnel)
11. Additional mental health services using team approaches, social and case workers, and psychiatrists
  - a. Direct services to children and their families
  - b. Assisting school personnel in understanding mental health problems and effects on learning
12. Outdoor education programs for exceptional children (day camp, short-term, or long-term residential camps)
  - a. Special education programs
  - b. Camping and outdoor life experiences for under-privileged children
13. Work-study programs for the physically or mentally handicapped

E. Research and Development Services and Programs

1. Basic research functions (evaluation and assessment projects, computer assisted instruction, and studies of needs)
2. Cooperation and assistance in various research projects
  - a. Locally oriented
  - b. Regionally oriented
  - c. Coordinating the identification of problems and resources
  - d. Quality control
  - e. Long-range planning activities
3. Establishing and administering, regional, state, and national standardized testing programs (achievement, ability, readiness, aptitude, diagnostic, and intelligence)
4. Additional test interpretation and analysis
5. Development of local and area testing norms
6. Research and study design services
7. Dissemination of information concerning curriculum research programs and findings from various sources
8. Informational programs dealing with innovative practices
9. Special curriculum research at local district request
10. Planning for the use of funds from federal and other sources

11. Programs designed to improve and extend the use of electronic data processing in schools
12. Determination of common research and planning needs of several school districts
  - a. Regional planning and development efforts
  - b. Coordination of research programs originating at the local district level
13. Provisions for consultants to work with constituent districts on research and developmental problems
14. Provisions for federally financed supplementary education centers
  - a. Planning activities
  - b. Pilot projects
  - c. Implementation of activities designed to meet special needs
15. Liaison with Regional Educational Laboratories
16. Surveys of area educational needs and concerns
17. Public relations and dissemination of pertinent findings to the general public
18. Responsibility for review of constituent districts' federal project proposals
  - a. Consultative functions
  - b. Recommendations for consideration by the state education agency
19. On-going evaluation of federal programs
20. Program analyses and evaluations at local district request
  - a. Studies of current practices
  - b. Surveys of needs, problems, and attitudes
  - c. Special projects evaluation
  - d. Follow-up studies
21. General consultative and in-service training responsibilities with local district personnel

It is recognized that this outline represents only a partial listing of the multitude of potential programs and services available from a regional educational service agency. The listing was limited to those activities specifically observed during visitations to many intermediate units. No evaluation as to the need for or effectiveness of the activities has been attempted; thus, no value judgments have been offered. The scope of the presentation has been confined to a simple listing in outline form and a possibly ideal allocation of functions was not included in the comments.

The listing shows the extreme diversity of programs and services provided by existing intermediate units. The listing also illustrates the potential for flexibility in meeting specific needs peculiar to one region.



## V. FINANCING

A fundamental consideration in a discussion of any educational agency is the method of financial support of the agency. This concern is as important to the intermediate unit as it is to the local school district, the state education agency, and various institutions of higher education. For the intermediate unit, in particular, the importance of providing financial resources which are as definite and reliable as the resources of local school districts and the state agency is stressed.<sup>1</sup> When the middle echelon in the total state system is considered, it is apparent that the "definite and reliable criterion" is, in practice, often neglected.

### Methods of Financing

State aid, intermediate unit tax resources, and funds secured through contractual arrangements with local school districts are usually cited as the principal means of financial support for the intermediate service agency.<sup>2</sup>

To this list can be added such spasmodic sources as gifts, bequests, and special grants of various types. Therefore, it appears that only three basic, regular sources of financing are commonly available to the intermediate unit, and at least one of these contractual arrangements with local school districts may not meet the standard of "definite and reliable" revenue sources.

Isenberg cited the three basic financial reservoirs available to the intermediate unit in terms of tax bases. These included the tax bases of the regional service area, the constituent local school districts, the state, or some combination of these.<sup>3</sup>

In discussing the financial characteristics of intermediate units, three concepts concerning statutory powers are important. These are fiscal integrity, fiscal independence, and the power to incur indebtedness.

Fiscal integrity is the delegation of full responsibility to the board for determining and certifying the annual budget for operation of the intermediate service unit. Tax levying power is implied in the definition of fiscal

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<sup>1</sup> Rhodes (ed.), op.cit., pp. 9-13.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op.cit., p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> Regional Educational Service Agency Prototypes, op.cit., p. 68.

integrity. It is possible to require budget publications and hearings or to specify other controls by statute, but, in the final analysis, actual determination and decision for the budget is left to the intermediate board of education.

The second concept, fiscal independence, implies the delegation of full responsibility to the board to determine not only the purposes for which funds will be used but also the amount to be expended. A fiscally independent board's budget is not subjected to review or approval by any other body. The term does not imply, however, that there can not be a legal restriction on the amount to be spent. It is also possible for other forms of general control to be specified, for example, statutory provision for approval of the budget by popular referendum.

Authority to levy taxes is implied in both of these concepts. An intermediate school district whose governing body has fiscal integrity and fiscal independence is generally considered to be a legally constituted special district for purposes of taxation.

Most writers agree that the intermediate board should be granted fiscal integrity and independence. Sabin, for example, recommended that the board be fiscally independent, have the power to determine the budget with no review by an outside agency, and have the right to levy taxes.<sup>1</sup> Others have suggested that the board be granted authority to contract with individual local districts and/or other public or private agencies for support or remuneration for services provided. It is thus implied that services which are not provided generally to all school districts should be available on a contract basis to local districts desiring them.

A third financial concept is the authority to incur indebtedness. Boards with this power may sell bonds as a means of financing major capital expenditures. Although many public agencies have such authority, subject to legal restrictions, it is a right not frequently granted to the intermediate unit but generally recommended.

The six commonly recommended characteristics of desirable intermediate agency financing may be summarized as (1) fiscal integrity, (2) fiscal independence, (3) independent tax levying powers, (4) a right to enter into contracts, (5) authority to incur bonded indebtedness, and (6) eligibility for state financial support based on the state aid to education formula.

Fourteen three-echelon states were visited by the project staff. These states were California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota,

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<sup>1</sup> Sabin, op.cit., p. 421.

Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. Of the fourteen, Michigan most nearly approximates the six recommended financial characteristics in its organizational provisions for the intermediate unit. Iowa, with no bonding authority for the intermediate unit board, meets five of the six standards.

Most of the other states, including those with cooperative educational service agencies, provide for state subsidy and contractual arrangements. The remaining four criteria are generally not met, however. The necessity for the intermediate service unit to derive a portion of its financial support from the state level has received much emphasis in the literature. State aid is recommended in that the middle echelon agency is viewed as an integral part of the total state system for public education.

Although meeting only two of the six standards, California is illustrative of a state in which all three financial sources are utilized. Local school district funds contribute to the intermediate agency's support by means of contractual agreements and cooperative arrangements. A fairly high level of state assistance is apparent in California, and the county tax base also provides support. The political county governmental structure is the taxing unit, however, and the intermediate board does not have the power to levy taxes.

It was noted in several states that the middle echelon educational service unit was heavily dependent on cooperative, contractual agreements for program support. These arrangements violate the standard of providing a "definite and reliable" source of finance. The revenue derived from such agreements oftentimes lack stability and continuity. An example of the disadvantages of dependence on cooperative arrangements was noted in a situation in which the smallest, and less frequent, user of a regional film library was able to restrict a program enthusiastically supported by all other participants in the cooperative film library.

## VI. STAFFING

The question of staffing the newly emerging regional educational service agency has not yet received major research attention for personnel other than the desirable characteristics of the chief administrative officer. As the role and function of this unit is established, this question will require detailed study and analysis.

Isenberg is among the many writers who have noted that the services of the intermediate unit should be of a highly specialized nature.<sup>1</sup> The relationship of specialized intermediate services which are non-duplicating, complementary, and supplementary in character, to staffing considerations is obvious. If the intermediate agency is to function as an integral part of the tri-level state educational team, it must preserve what has been described as its "institutional integrity."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the quality of the intermediate staff becomes a key factor in the total operation. It is in the realm of "institutional integrity," then, that the necessity for quality personnel becomes particularly important.

Emerson reinforced this concept when he stated:

Mature intermediate districts are constituted on a horizontal team basis to operate within their constituencies. The clinical team, the team of Ph.D. instructional specialists, the research team, the special education team, and the data processing team--all are staffed with highly specialized and highly qualified people, all are available to attack specialized tasks within their constituency. They are effective. Their services are in demand.<sup>3</sup>

It is therefore recognized that highly trained, specialized personnel operating within a discrete division of labor are required in an effective intermediate unit. In the more effective operations observed, highly trained practitioners were allowed to specialize in their specific area of preparation and specialty. By means of this discrete specialization of functions, a few regional educational service agencies are able to offer "the best in the way of sophisticated practice that technology and educational and para-educational disciplines have to offer."<sup>4</sup> These units have been able to assemble specialized staffs of recognized quality who are in great demand by constituent local districts.

In attempts to secure a highly qualified professional staff, some intermediate units observed have fostered relationships with institutions of higher education. Typically, these relationships involve the employment of intermediate unit personnel by the institution of higher education on a

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<sup>1</sup>Regional Educational Service Agency Prototypes, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>Emerson, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>4</sup>Prototypes, loc. cit.



part-time basis. This practice, which is generally promoted by the intermediate unit, has a number of advantages for both bodies. For the intermediate unit, the major advantages of such arrangements are that (1) personnel gain valuable teaching experience, (2) personnel are provided with opportunities for contact with professional colleagues, (3) personnel are stimulated toward professional, and (4) channels of communication are established for other types of coordination and cooperation.

## VII. LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE

All 50 states have a legal structure for public education. Many areas of commonality are found when comparing the legislative provisions of one state with those of another. There is, however, considerable structural variation among the states.

The local school district is the basic operating and administrative unit in state systems of education. The local level is the closest to the people, and thus its basic structure tends to be understood best by the public. Although the basic philosophy might differ somewhat in the several states, all local units were originally established by some type of legislative action, and all currently function under provisions of state law. All local districts are governed by a lay board with delegated powers, all are eligible for state financial assistance on one basis or another, all have some type of tax-levying power, and, all have authority to incur bonded indebtedness. As indicated by Isenberg, all local school districts have some common legal characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

Commonalities can be noted in various states' provisions for the state-level educational agency. It is safe to say that upper echelon agencies have some but not as many corporate features in common with their counterparts in other states as do local school districts.

However, examination of the literature and observation of operating units shows that, in reference to the middle echelon of school government, wide variations in legislative provision exist between the several states.

It appears that one of the major reasons contributing to this situation is that the intermediate unit is not always recognized in the legal framework of a state as an integral component of the state educational system.

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<sup>1</sup> Prototypes, op.cit., pp. 59-60.

The first criterion proposed by Sabin which was mentioned previously emphasized the importance of making legal provisions for the functions, organization, and other aspects of the intermediate unit. This criterion stated that:

The functions, organization, and financing of the intermediate school district should be defined clearly and specified in the state law. The law should provide a sound basis for the relationship between the intermediate school district and local school districts, the state department of education, and other governmental units or agencies.<sup>1</sup>

A comment offered by Isenberg is particularly appropriate. He said:

The organization operating the center (the intermediate agency) should be an integral part of the state system of schools. To the extent that it is legally and operationally "in the line" as a part of the system, its behavior will be more responsive to constituent demand and more responsible to the state system.<sup>2</sup>

To varying degrees, it can be noted that Sabin's first criterion and Isenberg's observation are frequently absent in many three-echelon states.

From observations made by the project staff it can be concluded that weaknesses frequently found in intermediate units were brought about by the absence of specific legal or fiscal provisions.

The legal aspects in several states will be briefly considered as they relate to selected criteria previously discussed.

### California

Many of the provisions for public education in California are found in the state constitution. Rigidity is apparent, and it is often difficult for the intermediate agency to quickly respond to changing local needs and conditions. The intermediate unit is constitutionally limited to a single county area, but the flexible intermediate concept has resulted in the development of a wide number of cooperative endeavors by two or more county intermediate units.

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<sup>1</sup>Sabin, loc.cit.

<sup>2</sup>Prototypes, op.cit., p. 76.

With only a few notable exceptions the single-county intermediate units in California operate under the following legal characteristics:

1. All territory of the state is part of an intermediate district.
2. Governance is vested in a lay board whose members are usually elected to office.
3. In a few counties, the superintendent is selected by the boards, but in most counties he is popularly elected.
4. Salary of the chief administrator is mandated.
5. The county intermediate board does not have fiscal integrity, fiscal independence, taxing authority, or bonding power.
6. Extensive multi-regional agency cooperation is allowed.
7. Financial support is derived from County Board of Supervisors tax levy, state assistance, and contractual agreements with local districts and other intermediate agencies.

#### Washington

In 1965 Washington enacted legislation requiring the State Board of Education to develop a statewide plan of enlarged intermediate units. The provisions of the new legislation are permissive, however. The formation of new and broadened intermediate units is at present optional and depends on a vote of the local school district boards in the counties involved in each proposal.

Although the State Board of Education adopted a plan calling for fifteen intermediate districts, only five new intermediate units have been created. At least six other proposals have failed because of opposition in at least one of the counties involved.

As a result of the 1965 legislation and previous statutory enactments, most intermediate units in Washington have the following legal characteristics:

1. State statutes are rather specific as related to the intermediate unit. For example, state law establishes 38 specific duties and functions of each county superintendent.
2. All areas in Washington are included in an intermediate district.

3. Governance is vested in an elected lay board when a regional service agency is organized under permissive features of the recent legislation. County intermediate units do not have a board, but a county-wide district reorganization committee is utilized.
4. The intermediate unit usually has fiscal integrity but does not have fiscal independence.
5. The intermediate unit is not a taxing body. The budget is the responsibility of the county commissioners.
6. The intermediate unit is not authorized to incur bonded indebtedness.
7. A fairly high level of state support is in evidence.
8. Additional financial support comes from the political county taxing units and from contractual agreements with local school districts.
9. Multi-intermediate unit cooperative endeavors are legally possible.
10. By statute, intermediate units are prohibited from holding title to real property. Facilities may be leased, however.
11. The county and/or intermediate unit superintendents are named to office for a four-year term by means of popular election.
12. As elected officials, the chief administrators are limited in salary by statute.<sup>1</sup>

### Michigan

Michigan has a reasonably sound legal framework for the intermediate unit. Michigan's legal structure recognizes the intermediate unit as an integral part of the state school system. As a result the intermediate unit is vital and effective, particularly in suburban areas.

The following commonalities in legal characteristics presently exist:

1. All areas of Michigan are included on the intermediate structure.
2. The intermediate district is governed by a lay board with members usually selected by the constituent local districts.

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Bill 304, Washington State General Assembly, 1965.



3. Legislation guarantees fiscal integrity and independence, although intermediate district budgets are subject to review by constituent districts.

4. The intermediate board of directors has taxing power and bonding authority, and is allowed to hold title to real property.

5. Financing is primarily by means of taxation, state aid, and contractual agreements.

6. The board appoints the chief administrator, the staff, and sets salaries.

7. Many permissive program features are apparent, and ample provision is made for cooperation among regional agencies.

8. Legally, program participation by local districts is optional with the exception of regulatory aspects of the intermediate operation.

Another important feature of the legal framework in Michigan is that it provides, to some degree, systematic revision of all three levels. Emerson noted that the "product mix" of Michigan's intermediate districts "rests to a greater rather than a lesser extent on permissive legislation."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the need for a state systems approach and the advantages of a degree of permissiveness in legislation were emphasized. However, the necessity for adequate statutory arrangements similar to those typically provided for the state and local levels cannot be minimized.

### Nebraska and Wisconsin

Recently adopted statutory provisions for the intermediate level educational service agency in Nebraska and Wisconsin have several characteristics in common. Although specific legal stipulations differ, the end product, the newly established cooperative units, are comparable in the two states.

Both states recently passed significant legislation which completely revised the traditional county intermediate structure.

Despite the fact that different provisions are used in the two states' statutes, the philosophy of local school district determination and control permeates the new legislative framework. In Nebraska, local control was protected by means of several specific statutory stipulations:

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<sup>1</sup> Emerson, op.cit., p. 36.

1. The regional service agency is limited solely to those educational tasks usually classified under the heading of supplementary services.

2. The voting public in each county is given the right to decide whether the county should become a member of the cooperative agency.

3. The voters can also decide by referendum to cancel a county's membership in the regional unit.

4. The general public in each county elects the cooperative service agency board of directors. Each county, in reality, forms a director district.

Wisconsin's protection of local control is, in one respect, even more direct than that built into the Nebraska statute. In fact, the intermediate legislation in Wisconsin has strengthened the position of local school boards. This was purposely accomplished in the following ways:

1. Membership on the part of local districts is mandated.

2. The regional governing body is selected from the membership of the local district boards of education.

3. In addition to board membership potential, the local district's voice in the operation of the unit is strengthened in another significant way. The law provides for an active advisory committee of local district administrators.

4. Although membership is mandated, local schools are not compelled to accept any services from the middle echelon agency.

Provisions for financial support differ considerably in the two states.

The "intermediate" board in Wisconsin was given no taxing power; and a very low level of state support, currently limited to \$29,000 annually for each agency, was specified. Therefore, Wisconsin's nineteen units are principally dependent upon contractual agreements with local districts. However, the local school districts are not legally obligated to enter into agreements for any services.

In theory, Nebraska's financing meets the recommended criteria in that the service unit has taxing power, state aid is provided, and contractual reimbursements are permitted. In practice, however, at least at this time, state assistance is paid at a low rate, and the taxing body is limited to a one-mill levy on Nebraska's already overburdened real property. The financing problem is compounded by the fact that the county as a unit can vote to be excluded from the intermediate structure.

Nebraska and Wisconsin have apparently recognized the middle echelon agency's "posture of service." It appears, however, that as presently constituted the middle echelon in Nebraska and Wisconsin cannot function as an integral part of the state system of education. Several reasons for this statement can be cited:

1. The various criteria relating to financial support have only been partially met.

2. In reality, all property within the two states has not been included in an intermediate district. In Nebraska, a county may vote to be excluded, and the two largest local districts are automatically omitted. Legally, all school districts in Wisconsin are members of an intermediate unit, but their participation is not required.

3. The intermediate agency's right to self-determination of services is severely restricted by law. In addition, other legal restrictions, such as Wisconsin's salary ceiling for the agency's chief administrator (coordinator), create serious obstacles in recruitment of personnel.

Parenthetically, functional limitations in Nebraska are even more apparent. The legislation did not actually abolish the Office of County Superintendent. Thus, in practice, the county office is being "phased out," but, in the interim two middle level agencies remain operational. The new cooperative agencies are service oriented while the county office is primarily concerned with traditional regulatory and statistical functions.

## CHAPTER IV

### AN ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERMEDIATE UNITS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, intermediate agency organizational and operational characteristics are analyzed in terms of characteristics discussed in Chapter III. Following the established format, the criteria are related to intermediate unit organization and administration, programs and services, financing, staffing, and legislation. Specific operating middle echelon educational service agencies in several regions of the United States are cited as examples.

Twelve of the service units to which reference is made were visited by the project staff. These are:

1. Intermediate District No. IX, King County, Seattle, Washington
2. Snohomish County Schools, Everett, Washington
3. Wayne County Intermediate School District, Detroit, Michigan
4. Oakland Schools, Pontiac, Michigan
5. Alameda County School Department, Hayward, California
6. Riverside County Schools, Riverside, California
7. San Diego County Department of Education, San Diego, California
8. Bucks County Public Schools, Doylestown, Pennsylvania
9. Allegheney County Schools, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
10. Multnomah County Intermediate Education District, Portland, Oregon
11. Scott-Muscatine Counties School System, Davenport, Iowa
12. Polk County School System, Des Moines, Iowa



Reference is made to four additional examples which are Shiawasee County, Michigan; Erie County, New York; Contra-Costa County (Oakland), California and Harris County (Houston), Texas. Information in these units was secured from two of the most recent publications on the intermediate unit of school administration.<sup>1</sup> Table 9 presents the pupil population and area in square miles for each of the sixteen agencies.

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<sup>1</sup>National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, Regional Educational Service Agency Prototypes, Optional Statutory Arrangements and Suggestions For Implementation (Washington: National Education Association, January, 1967), and Pennsylvania State Board of Education, Intermediate Units In the United States: A Survey of Twelve Units (Harrisburg: State Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1966).

TABLE 9

APPROXIMATE PUPIL POPULATION AND TOTAL DISTRICT AREA IN  
SQUARE MILES FOR SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIVE INTERMEDIATE UNITS

State	Agency	Approximate Pupil Population	Approximate Area In Square Miles
Washington	King (Seattle)	218,000	2,100*
Washington	Snohomish (Everett)	59,000	1,700*
Oregon	Multnomah (Portland)	110,000	400
Michigan	Wayne (Detroit)	335,000**	400
Michigan	Oakland (Pontiac)	220,000	900
Michigan	Shiawasee (Near Flint)	18,000	1,000
Pennsylvania	Bucks (Doylestown)	82,000	1,000
Pennsylvania	Allegheney (Pittsburgh)	206,000**	900
New York	Erie (Near Buffalo)	80,000	1,000*
Iowa	Polk (Des Moines)	63,000	600
Iowa	Scott-Muscatine (Davenport)	60,000	1,400
California	Contra-Costa (Near Oakland)	150,000	900
California	San Diego (San Diego)	290,000	4,300*
California	Alameda (Hayward)	240,000	700
California	Riverside (Riverside)	100,000	7,200*
Texas	Harris (Houston)	350,000	5,000*

\* Driving time to at least one attendance center exceeds one hour.

\*\* Central city public school enrollment not included.

As suggested in Chapter III, it is essential that each intermediate unit be unique and distinctive in and of itself. As previously stated, it is often contended that there is no "best" single design or "best" operational framework for all intermediate units.<sup>1</sup> Local area needs and conditions, as well as extreme diversity of state legal structures, must always be considered.

The illustrative agencies cited in this chapter are indeed diverse. However, all vividly demonstrate that regional or multi-district approaches to the solution of educational problems have developed in various parts of the United States. These approaches have developed in many different ways, under a variety of circumstances, and within the framework of varying legal and constitutional structures. Some agencies are relatively new, and others, although having undergone some modification, have operated for many years. Most are part of a total state system for public education, while others operate almost entirely outside the formal state structure.

Although the relationship of several characteristics to previously mentioned criteria is considered, the intermediate units mentioned are cited only as examples for purposes of analysis. Evaluation of specific agencies is not the objective of this analysis.

#### A Taxonomy for Analysis

Extreme diversity among intermediate units makes valid analysis difficult. The problem seems to stem from a natural tendency to consider a specific unit in relation to all other intermediate agencies. Comparative analysis is the method generally used and the myriad variables frequently are oftentimes overlooked as criteria are applied for analytical purposes.

Although the full development and utilization of a taxonomy is beyond the scope of this study, it appears that meaningful analysis requires an intermediate unit classificatory scheme beyond what is now available. It is critical that certain important factors be held constant, thus minimizing some of the more obvious variables. With the major variable held constant, "like" agencies can more objectively be analyzed. This approach would produce more valid analysis than the usual comparative methods. A few possible categories for a taxonomy to be used in an analytical approach are listed below in outline form.

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<sup>1</sup>Alvin E. Rhodes (ed), National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units (Washington: National Education Association, 1963), p. 9.

- A. Organization
  - 1. Method of governance
  - 2. Selection of governing body
  - 3. Intermediate structure
    - (a) County unit
    - (b) Regional agency
- B. Administration
  - 1. Method of selection of chief administrator
    - (a) elective
    - (b) appointive
  - 2. Authority vested in chief executive officer
- C. Programs and Services
  - 1. Indirect orientation
  - 2. Direct orientation
  - 3. Voluntary cooperative participation
  - 4. Required participation
- D. Finance
  - 1. Major sources of revenue
    - (a) Area taxes
    - (b) State assistance
    - (c) Contractual arrangements with local and/or intermediate districts
  - 2. Taxing powers
    - (a) Intermediate board taxing body
    - (b) Political county taxing unit
    - (c) Bonding authority and/or rights to real property
- E. Staffing
  - 1. Size and type
  - 2. Selection methods
- F. Legislative Provisions
  - 1. Prescribed, statutory and/or constitutional
  - 2. Permissive
  - 3. Total state system philosophy
  - 4. Extent of program controls
  - 5. Degree of local district program determination
- G. Setting and Population
  - 1. Urban
    - (a) Suburban
    - (b) Central metropolitan



2. Rural
3. Percentage of state area included in intermediate structure
  - (a) All area
  - (b) Excluded areas
4. Population
  - (a) Density or sparsity
  - (b) Total population
  - (c) Pupil population
5. Topography and/or climate
6. Road networks
7. Total area or intermediate district
8. Area economy
  - (a) Industrial
  - (b) Agricultural
  - (c) Diversified

#### H. Local School District Structure

1. Number of districts
2. Types of districts
  - (a) Unified
  - (b) Non-unified
3. Reorganized
4. Non-reorganized
5. Individual district enrollments
6. Individual district financial capabilities

The many examples of possible categories for an intermediate unit taxonomy are clearly indicative of the numerous variables not usually considered in most analytical endeavors. As formerly stated, the development and utilization of such a taxonomy is not within the scope of this study. However, these potential diversities are reflected in the analysis which follows.

## II. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

As previously mentioned, criteria for intermediate unit organization and administration have received much attention in the literature. The size criterion, in particular, has been discussed both in terms of total area and required population. Another commonly expressed requisite for effective organization and administration is a popularly elected lay governing board with authority to select the chief executive officer.

Many recent writers agree that modern conditions and needs require a multi-county or regional base for the intermediate district. This, however, is not the case with a majority of the illustrative agencies. Many are single-county intermediate units, or vary only slightly from the boundaries of the political county.

### District Size and Pupil Population

Agreement as to total square miles to be included in a single intermediate unit is definitely not apparent. Depending upon climate, topography, road networks, population density and many other local conditions, recommendations range from 400 to 9,000 square miles.

The total area dimension of the size criterion has also been stated in very general terms. For instance, it has been suggested that the territory embraced should be sufficient to provide challenging opportunities for leadership, have a well prepared professional staff, and provide maximum offerings of needed programs and services.

"Reasonable limits" for middle-echelon agencies in more sparsely populated regions have also been emphasized.<sup>1</sup> Such limitations on service district size are stipulated to assure accessibility, communication coordination, and sensitivity to local needs. One hour's driving time from the intermediate unit's central office to any attendance center in the service agency has also been used as a "yardstick."

Although most of the illustrative service agencies serve a single political county, they do have pupil populations and general population which more than meet minimal standards. It is unfortunate that in searching for intermediate units with some exemplary features, offices centered in predominately rural areas, in general, had to be excluded. Perhaps indicative of the current national picture is the fact that the stronger operations were generally found in more heavily populated areas.

The apparent dearth of intermediate units in rural areas with many noteworthy programs or services is particularly significant when it is recalled that a rather common assumption is that the middle echelon educational service agency's greatest strength lies in the rural parts of the nation.

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<sup>1</sup>The Task Force on Education, Education for the Future of Illinois (Springfield: State of Illinois, 1966), p. 80.

The approximate public school enrollment and the approximate area in square miles for each of the sixteen illustrative intermediate districts is presented in Table 9. It can be noted that the range in area is approximately 400 to 7,200 square miles. The two smallest districts, in terms of total area, Multnomah and Wayne Counties, encompass single counties with a major city in each county.

Thus, all illustrative units fall within the very broad 400 to 9,000 square miles category. More meaningful, probably, is that one-hour driving time standard is violated in six of the sixteen districts. Of the six, all include areas of approximately 1,000 or more square miles; two have some extremely mountainous terrain; four are situated in congested areas; and one serves a county in excess of 7,200 square miles. It is also of interest that all sixteen units are known to have well-developed road networks.

As reported in Table 9, the smallest unit in number of pupils is Shiawasee County, in rural Michigan. Harris County, Texas, with 350,000 students, is the largest, but this total included approximately 220,000 pupils enrolled in the Houston City Schools. In contrast, Detroit and Pittsburgh public school pupils are not included in the 350,000 and 206,000 totals reported for Wayne and Allegheney Counties, respectively.

#### Governance and Selection of Chief Administration

Authorities have demonstrated unanimity of agreement that the intermediate unit board of directors should be popularly elected. This policy-making lay board should also be charged with responsibility for selection of its chief executive officer.

Nine of the illustrative agencies are governed by popularly elected lay boards of education. The governing boards of the three Michigan intermediate districts are chosen by a delegate assembly of representatives from the school boards of constituent local districts. The two Pennsylvania units and the unit in Erie County, New York, have boards whose members are selected by the total membership of the boards of education of the local school districts.

Snohomish County, Washington, has no governing body, as such, but neighboring King County is among the nine illustrative units with popularly elected boards. This paradox resulted from recent legislation in Washington. King County reorganized into Intermediate District IX and now is within the new legal framework. Snohomish County has not reorganized along regional lines, so it remains subject to the older statutes.

The appointment of the superintendent by the governing board of the intermediate unit is fairly common among the sixteen districts. The chief administrative officer is appointed by the board in eleven of the intermediate operations. In the remaining five the superintendent is selected by the electorate in a popular election. In three of these, located in California, the superintendent is elected by the voters in a non-partisan election. San Diego County is one of California's few exceptions to the general rule, in that the superintendent is appointed by the board of directors.

### III. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A number of truly innovative and exemplary programs and services were observed in the various middle echelon agencies visited. No attempt is made to describe these operations in detail, rather some outstanding features of the twelve illustrative agencies visited are briefly discussed.

#### King County (Intermediate District IX), Seattle, Washington

A basic philosophy in the King County unit holds that services to local school districts should be flexible. Therefore, the entire operation is geared for sensitivity to local district needs. Advisory committees of local school district personnel are utilized extensively, and the intermediate agency's "program mix" is dependent upon individual district needs.

The **intermediate** office is seen as a service agency without responsibility for operation of direct programs. Consequently, consultative functions in many areas are emphasized. The overall approach to consultation is somewhat novel in that a well qualified intermediate staff member is assigned for a period of time to a single school district. This specialist then remains with the local district for the duration of a specific project.

The King County unit administers a well stocked central instructional materials depository and two strategically located sub-centers housed in local district facilities. Booking, delivery, film maintenance, and related services are provided. In addition, the sub-centers house instructional materials and production services.



A truly outstanding feature is the intermediate unit's excellent relationships with various and diverse governmental, community, and civic groups in the Seattle area. Particularly evident is the cooperation between the intermediate office and the county and regional planning groups with the result that long-range educational planning exists to a high degree in King County.

Seattle and its surrounding area have obviously reaped many benefits from the Seattle World's Fair of the early 1960's. Many exposition buildings were constructed as permanent structures and have provided excellent facilities for various community endeavors. The Pacific Science Center, with which the intermediate unit has a cooperative arrangement, is a case in point. This complex consists of five modernistic buildings which are used extensively as a supplement to science education classroom activities. Particularly for the elementary pupil, it is an enrichment and an adventure in science, mathematics, and related fields.

The Pacific Science Center, with its beautiful and utilitarian facilities and its outstanding equipment, is also used by the intermediate agency for meaningful in-service activities for teachers of King and neighboring counties.

#### Snohomish County, Everett, Washington

Snohomish County lies directly north of King County and is involved in several cooperative activities with the King County intermediate unit.

Although Snohomish County is mountainous and not as heavily populated as King County, there are more than 59,000 public school students within the confines of the Snohomish Intermediate District. The middle echelon service agency offers a fairly wide range of programs and services. Consideration will be limited to only two of the more exemplary operations, however.

The county education office, in conjunction with local districts, began a program for educable mentally handicapped boys who had been considered "problem children." This very successful program is, in reality, a residential camp. Located in the mountains, "Victoria Ranch" is a notable example of outdoor, rehabilitative education and training for the mentally handicapped.

The intermediate unit has some exceptional family counseling services. Problems of relationships between children and adults receive much attention in this program, and adults become deeply involved in the activity.

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An excellent in-service education program for teachers is an integral part of the family counseling project. Emphasis is placed upon the training of the teachers of children with behavior problems. Classroom teachers are afforded opportunities to work with specialists in child development, health, and psychology.

Multnomah County, Portland, Oregon

Much cooperative planning and coordination with constituent school districts is evident in this unit. In-service education activities are numerous and include training courses for non-professional employees such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and custodians.

The Multnomah Intermediate Education District, with federal funding under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, is developing a model outdoor education program. This four-county program is already underway and includes a week of camping experience for all sixth grade students in the four counties.

One of the better organized cooperative purchasing operations was observed in the Multnomah unit. Cooperative purchasing has been an activity of this intermediate unit for nine years. Items purchased for local districts by the county office include standard school supplies, gasoline, fuel oil, tires, and school buses. To support the administrative costs of the program, a charge of 8 per cent is made to the local districts, except for the very large administrative units which generally provide their own delivery service. These districts are paid a 4 per cent service charge. Even with these service charges, local districts enjoy an average cost savings of one-third.

An exemplary Metropolitan Area Testing Program is directed by the intermediate unit. This is one of the few middle-echelon activities in which the Portland City School System is a full participant. The intermediate district's data processing installation is efficiently utilized in the testing program. In addition to the usual test activities, the county office has designed several standardized tests for local school districts. Local area norms have also been developed for a number of standardized tests.

The Multnomah unit also operates an excellent educational program for emotionally disturbed children. This program is conducted in a residential facility for the emotionally disturbed.

### Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan

This metropolitan area service agency is a prime example of an indirect service-oriented intermediate unit.

Formerly, the Wayne County Office served smaller local districts in the county. In the past ten years, the philosophy of the unit has been one of service to all districts.

The Wayne County emphasis is now on the leadership role with a regional concept brought about by involvement in many federal programs. This office is also typical of what appears to be a widespread approach in some Michigan intermediate units. Close contacts and even direct liaisons are maintained with the Michigan legislature and federal agencies.

The Wayne unit provides excellent services to local school districts in school building and site planning. The long-term aspects of the planning process are stressed. In cooperation with local district personnel or as a complete service, the intermediate unit has developed outstanding educational specifications for specific local school district building programs.

A federally financed Desegregation Advisory Project is staffed by intermediate personnel and involves the service agency in the area's more controversial and urgent matters. This involvement vividly demonstrates an intermediate unit's sensitivity to local needs.

### Oakland County, Pontiac, Michigan

Oakland and Wayne Counties are close neighbors and are part of the same metropolitan complex. Yet, it would be difficult to find a distinct example of differing philosophies concerning programs and services.

As previously stated, the Wayne County Intermediate District typifies the philosophy of indirect service to constituents. Oakland, the adjacent county, is perhaps one of this nation's outstanding examples of the philosophy of direct services in intermediate unit programming.

The Oakland Intermediate District has many clinics staffed with highly trained personnel. Several of these clinics are directed by individuals with earned doctorates, and all clinicians have specialized, advanced graduate training. Pupils from schools within the county are transported to the intermediate center for clinical work.

The Speech Clinic illustrates the training and staff specialization noted in all of the other clinics. Three members of this staff hold the Ph.D. Degree. The clinic is also staffed by two social workers, two psychologists, and six speech clinicians, and consultant services of area physicians are utilized as needed.

Oakland County's arrangements for special education are unusual. Although consultants from the intermediate office are frequently used, in most instances special classes for exceptional children are operated at the local district level. Facilities for these programs are provided by the intermediate unit, and the Oakland Intermediate District frequently builds and finances a special education wing on local school buildings. In other situations the intermediate office purchases space in local attendance centers and converts this space to special education use. In either case the facilities then become the property of the local school district. The teachers for these programs are paid by the intermediate unit but are considered members of local staffs.

Specialized subject matter consultants are also provided by the intermediate unit. Another outstanding program is the unit's computer installation. At present the computer center assists constituent districts in accounting, payroll, general inventories, library inventories, purchasing, attendance and pupil accounting, student scheduling, and test scoring and analysis. An advanced systems staff is currently completing plans for a complete data processing system, and all attendance centers in the county soon will be served by terminal input-output devices connected to computers by telephone lines.

#### Bucks County, Doylestown, Pennsylvania

This county intermediate unit encompasses a somewhat rural area in fairly close proximity to Philadelphia. In general, Bucks County provides services for its constituent districts according to specific educational needs of individual students or school districts.

An outstanding feature of the Bucks County program is in the area of special education. The county agency operates, coordinates, supervises, and evaluates classes and programs covering almost the entire range of special education programs and services.

Local districts, or combinations of districts, are encouraged to operate special education programs, but some of these are staffed and operated by the intermediate unit. The county office also sets up classes to be conducted as models. When local districts have their own programs for exceptional children, high quality consultative services are furnished.



A few of the outstanding programs and services observed in Bucks County were those concerned with the mentally retarded, the severely orthopedically handicapped, and the deaf or hard of hearing. County clinics are staffed by well qualified professionals.

It appears that the Bucks County staff is doing an exceptionally fine job in developing special educational programs and curriculums for exceptional children of various types. In addition, auditory training, instruction in the use and care of hearing aids, and much work with visually deficient, brain damaged, and emotionally disturbed children is evident.

Bucks County also has extensive research and planning services with the research and development staff assisting or administering research efforts on a regional basis. The staff is now participating in a federally funded research and planning project embracing an area well beyond county lines. Thirty-six school districts with more than 200,000 students are involved.

The Bucks County Intermediate Unit is also working with programmatic budgeting. Considerable computer-based operational analysis has been completed, and the emphasis is on management science.

#### Allegheney County, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

All of Allegheney County except Pittsburgh is a part of the intermediate district. A rather complete range of programs and services is provided.

The intermediate office, in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, has an excellent instructional materials center. The university provides facilities in its famous Cathedral of Learning and bears most of the operational costs. The University of Pittsburgh and the 45 districts in Allegheney County have equal access to the materials center. University faculty, student teachers, and interns also use the center. The center director teaches audio-visual courses at the university. A considerable amount of in-service work with Allegheney County teachers is also done at the center.

As a part of Pennsylvania's rather unique system of "jointures," the intermediate office administers area vocational-technical schools for eleventh and twelfth grade high school students. The students maintain identity with individual high schools by spending a portion of their time in their own schools.

Also, by "jointure," an excellent system of schools for exceptional children has been developed. New and functional facilities have been built, usually near a local district attendance center. Contrary to what is frequently the case, special education pupils in Allegheny County occupy some of the finest educational facilities in the county.

The special schools are directed by intermediate unit administrative personnel, and the teachers are, at least indirectly, employees of the intermediate agency. An outstanding hospital teaching program is operated by the intermediate agency.

As is true with most of the illustrative agencies, Allegheny County participates in many federal programs. One very ambitious project is entitled "A Survey and Evaluation of Educational Needs and Resources in Allegheny County."

#### Alameda County, Hayward, California

The Alameda County Education Department, in the San Francisco-Oakland area, is service rather than program oriented. The intermediate agency will operate programs but only until such time as local school districts are able to assume the responsibility.

Two outstanding features of the Alameda County unit are noteworthy. They are the curriculum-materials center and production services for instructional materials.

The curriculum-materials center furnishes audio-visual, school library, and curriculum library services to local schools in Alameda County. The audio-visual library provides teaching aids to sixteen local school districts on a contractual basis. Audio-visual equipment owned by fifteen contracting districts is maintained and repaired by the county unit. An interesting feature is the loan service for the contracting districts. As equipment is picked up for repair, replacements are loaned until the original equipment is returned to the local district.

Supplementary texts are supplied to eight contracting school districts. A curriculum library of professional books, periodicals, and other materials serves all teachers as does a special production unit. This unit develops audio-visual materials to meet specific needs of the curriculum of the local district.

Alameda County's twenty-four basic units of school administration are the beneficiaries of exceptional production services from the intermediate office. Outstanding projects such as the illustration design and publication of curriculum materials were observed.

## Riverside County, Riverside, California

The large area of Riverside County occasionally requires plane travel by intermediate staff members to some school districts in the county. Large in area, the county is currently experiencing a rapid increase in population.

The philosophy of the Riverside Intermediate Unit is that the middle echelon educational service agency should serve in a coordinative and advisory role.

The Riverside Intermediate Unit is illustrative of the excellent use of data processing within the framework of statewide planning and computer-system utilization. In many sections of California, data processing hardware is shared by several adjacent county agencies, including the intermediate unit. In Riverside the intermediate office has access to a regional installation and uses computers for routine administrative and clerical tasks. Detailed planning for more extensive use of advanced systems technology for specific instructional areas has been completed and will be initiated in the near future.

This operation is an excellent example of a close relationship of the intermediate unit to institutions of higher education. Personnel from institutions of higher education serve as advisors, consultants, resource persons, and directors of seminars and institutes sponsored by the unit.

In keeping with the philosophy of the unit which stresses a coordinative and advisory role, the intermediate office has an extremely large budget for hiring outside consultants. Due probably to the close contacts with college and universities and the ample funds available, local school districts in Riverside County benefit from extensive use of this type of consultative personnel.

In-service education programs for teachers and administrators, as well as direct, special consultative services to local districts, are among the best in the county. Experts from various parts of the United States are brought in to lead workshops and institutes and to serve as special consultants to local schools. Diverse specialty fields and general areas both receive attention. A 31-page consultant list is maintained, illustrative of this program. Table 10 shows the position, state, and special field of selected consultants employed by the intermediate unit in one year. It is indicative of the breadth of consultative expertise offered by Riverside County. This is one of the most outstanding programs of its type in the nation. The program exhibits one of the most important roles that the intermediate unit can play in a state system of education.

TABLE 10

## SELECTED CONSULTANTS EMPLOYED BY RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Position and State	Special Field
High School Administrator, Illinois	Flexible Scheduling Team Teaching
College Professor, California	Biological Science Curriculum Study
College Professor, Wisconsin	Language Arts
University Professor, California	Geography
University Professor, California	Mathematics
Department Director, City Schools, California	Testing
Branch Director, City Schools, California	Legal Problems
School Administrator, New York	Curriculum and Education Change
Coordinator, City Schools, California	Educational Television
College Division Chairman, California	Social Studies
University Professor, Delaware	Creative Writing
University Professor, California	Secondary Curriculum
University Professor, Illinois	Mathematics
University Department Director, Arizona	Audio-Visual
College Professor, California	Economic Education
College Director, California	Music
University Professor, Maryland	Science



TABLE 10 (Continued)

Position and State	Special Field
Teacher, City Schools, California	Kindergarten
University Professor, California	Curriculum Studies
University Professor, Florida	Psychology
University Dean, New York	Leadership
University Department Head, Oregon	Industrial Arts
University Department Director, New York	Special Education
Foundation Chairman, California	Federal Projects Proposals
College Professor, California	Chemistry
Research Director, Hospital, California	Mental Retardation
Administrator, City Schools, Ohio	Administration
Superintendent, City Schools, New York	Teacher Unions
County Consultant, California	Primary Education
Council Director, Washington, D.C.	Aviation Education
University Professor, California	Science Education
Editor, California	Educational Television
University Professor, Illinois	School Boards
Project Director, Colorado	Earth Science
University Professor, Michigan	Elementary Curriculum
University Professor, Iowa	Geography
College Professor, California	Guidance and Curriculum
University School Director, Ohio	Research

TABLE 10 (Continued)

Position and State	Special Field
Lecturer, New York	Social Sciences
Judge, Colorado	Juvenile Delinquency
College Professor, California	Academically Talented
University Department Head, Iowa	Child Development
Newspaperman, California	Journalism
University Professor, Pennsylvania	Curriculum
University Professor, California	Programmed Instruction
Army Psychiatrist, Texas	Psychology
County Consultant, Pennsylvania	Children's Literature
University Professor, California	School Finance
County Consultant, California	Art
Program Consultant, California	Culturally Deprived
University Professor, Massachusetts	Civic Education
Health Director, City Schools, California	Health Education
NEA Staff Member, Washington, D.C.	Curriculum Research
University Professor, Connecticut	Psychology
University Professor, Illinois	Reading
University Professor, Michigan	Pupil Personnel
University Professor, Indiana	Language Arts
Business Director, California	Personnel Management

TABLE 10 (Continued)

Position and State	Special Field
School Principal, California	Teacher Recruitment
Project Investigator, New York	Communications
Pediatrician, California	Genetics
Author, North Carolina	Children's Literature
University Professor, California	History
College Professor, California	Poetry
University Center Director, Oregon	Vocational Rehabilitation

#### San Diego County, San Diego, California

One convenient way to describe the broad scope of this intermediate unit is to examine the organization of the unit. Three assistant superintendents report directly to the superintendent. Their responsibilities include business services, special services, and curriculum services. Six directors report to the three assistant superintendents. The directors are in charge of audio-visual services, community educational resources, curriculum coordination, library services, pupil personnel services, and the supplementary education center.

San Diego County maintains one of the outstanding materials centers in the nation. This center provides a great number of services to 46 participating districts in the county. Particularly exemplary are in-service programs and consultative work in the audio-visual field.

One of the most impressive operations in the San Diego unit is The Community Educational Resources Unit. The activities of this unit consists of preparing materials for classroom use and providing a system for information dissemination and implementation.

To date, the unit has developed, packaged into subject area teaching units, and distributed almost four hundred items to schools. Included are sound film strips, wall charts, study prints, and teachers' guides

in such fields as space science, oceanography, zoology, botany, solid state physics, and nuclear energy. The items produced are among the finest teaching aids produced anywhere in the country.

The San Diego Intermediate Unit also typifies excellent utilization of advisory committees. One advisory committee is composed of 28 of the area's leading scholars, industrialists, educators, and military personnel.

This middle echelon agency provides extremely high quality publication services to the county's local school districts. An outstanding public information program is also maintained.

Another interesting program is the provision of a mobile shop, staffed by two teachers who travel in mobile trucks which are equipped to bring an enriched program of industrial arts and handicrafts to special education pupils, and children in more remote rural schools of the county.

#### Scott-Muscatine Counties, Davenport, Iowa

The Scott-Muscatine County School System is the first Iowa intermediate unit to complete a formal merger under provisions of permissive legislation passed in 1965.

This intermediate unit now serves seven reorganized local school districts in a two-county area. Slightly over 40,000 public school students are enrolled in schools within the service district.

One of the programs emphasized by this unit is an educational data processing center. The center presently offers a number of services to local school districts and is being structured to offer a comprehensive educational data processing program. The center is staffed by highly trained personnel who in a relatively short period of time developed a sophisticated program of information services for constituent local districts.

Another strong thrust of this unit has been in the provision of extensive programs and services in special education. A number of consultants in the area of special education are employed by the unit, and in addition the unit operates several programs for exceptional children. Consultants are also provided in several special curricular fields.

The Scott-Muscatine unit, although only recently organized, has already demonstrated the great potential of the regional approach in



Midwestern states such as Iowa. Strong intermediate leadership has resulted in the development of a number of innovative and exemplary programs and services.

#### Polk County, Des Moines, Iowa

This single-county intermediate unit is located in Iowa's largest metropolitan area. Although the basic district embraces only one county, some activities extend far beyond the political boundaries of Polk County.

A particularly noteworthy cooperative venture is educational television. Polk and three other counties and the Des Moines Public Schools administer one of the first educational television stations in the nation.

The Polk County unit has a number of outstanding pupil personnel services. The intermediate agency is responsible for the direct operation of some special education classes in the county and in addition, provides a number of consultants in special education who are in great demand by constituent local school districts. The unit also administers an educational program at the Polk County Juvenile Home.

The Polk County office is currently developing a sophisticated data processing system and is already deeply involved in activities such as student scheduling.

A truly innovative project is a three-year "drop-out" study. This on-going activity was originally designed as a program to help potential school dropouts find success within the school setting. Special enrichment programs in first, second, seventh and eighth grades are an integral part of the project.

These special enrichment programs developed and provided by the intermediate office use programmed materials, multi-ethnic texts, individualized reading activities, visual-perception measurement, anecdotal records, rating scales, readiness materials, home visitation, and flexible curriculum development. Total educational program planning is directly related to enrichment.

The Polk County educational service agency is another of the intermediate units with an excellent instructional materials center. Materials, including those circulated by mobile library services, are widely used throughout the intermediate area.

The Polk County unit is also an excellent example of close relationships with various social and health agencies in the county.

Outstanding leadership of the unit has shown that exemplary middle echelon services and programs are possible in the Middlewest.

#### IV. FINANCING

It has been noted that if the intermediate service agency is to be an integral part of the state's total system for public education, its financial resources must be as definite and reliable as those provided for the other two echelons.

Intermediate district (or county) funds, state assistance, and local district reimbursements based on contractual agreements are usually listed as the three principal sources of support for the middle echelon educational service agency. Additional financing often comes from federal grants, other special grants, and occasional gifts or bequests.

The six most commonly recommended characteristics of desirable intermediate unit financing were summarized as (1) fiscal integrity (2) fiscal independence, (3) independent tax levying powers, (4) a right to enter into contracts, (5) authority to incur bonded indebtedness, and (6) eligibility to receive state financial assistance based upon the state-aid-to-education formula.

When the various financial criteria are considered in relation to the sixteen illustrative intermediate agencies, it can be concluded that the middle echelon frequently is not a full partner in the total state system in many states. It is indeed a credit to the educational leaders of the sixteen units that outstanding features have developed even though financial criteria are generally violated.

Pertinent financial aspects, as related to the total systems approach, will be summarized by considering the illustrative agencies, grouped by states.

##### Oakland, Shiawasee, and Wayne Counties, Michigan

All three major financial sources are used for support of the Michigan intermediate units. The intermediate district is a taxing unit. Thus, its tax base is utilized as are state and local school district tax bases in the form of state aid and contractual agreements.

In general, the intermediate board has fiscal integrity and independence. Its budget is subject only to review and adoption by the constituent school district boards of education. In addition, Michigan is the only state among the eight to grant bonding authority to the intermediate board. It may therefore be assumed that for the most part "the definite and reliable" criterion is met in the financing provisions of the three illustrative Michigan agencies.

#### Scott-Muscatine and Polk Counties, Iowa

Financing for these Iowa intermediate units approaches the ideal in terms of the criteria. Fiscal integrity and independence is perhaps even more in evidence than in Michigan. Except for a legally prescribed public hearing, the intermediate unit enjoys almost total budgeting and tax-levying autonomy. The only ceilings are statutory limitations applying to all governing bodies.

All three financial sources are used, but until recently the major portion of financing has fallen on the overburdened property tax structure.

The "definite and reliable" criterion is met for the Iowa agencies. However, they have no bonding authority and thus do not have complete equality with local districts in terms of financial potential.

#### Multnomah County, Oregon

The Multnomah County Intermediate Education District is also supported by all three tax bases. Its governing board, although vested with taxing power, does not really have fiscal integrity. Financial provisions are, in fact, somewhat unique.

Many intermediate services cannot be included in the budget unless agreed upon by at least two-thirds of the local school districts enrolling 50 per cent of the pupils in the county. Without such approval the intermediate board of directors is powerless to budget funds for these special services.

It appears that the Multnomah unit must place too much dependence for support on contractual arrangements with local districts. Therefore, local district reimbursements for programs and services are extremely important, but sometimes indefinite, revenue sources.

If all financing factors are considered, Multnomah County's support does meet many of the criteria. However, the "definite and reliable"

criterion is violated when the intermediate unit's support is compared to support for the local and state-level educational agencies. As is true in seven of the eight states, or thirteen of the sixteen illustrative agencies, the Multnomah County Board of Education has no authority to issue bonds.

#### King and Snohomish Counties, Washington

These intermediate units do not have tax levying power even though all three sources of revenue are used. The county board of supervisors is the taxing body for taxes levied on property within the intermediate district. The King County Intermediate Board has fiscal integrity, but its fiscal independence is indeed limited.

The two Washington service agencies are extremely dependent upon local school district willingness to cooperate in financing programs and services. Thus, financial support in many instances stems only from cooperation. The "definite and reliable" criterion apparently is not always met. Bonding authority is also absent.

#### Allegheny and Bucks Counties, Pennsylvania

These intermediate districts do not have fiscal integrity and independence and have no power to issue bonds. The three revenue sources are utilized, however, and contractual agreements, although permitted, are not emphasized. State aid at a fairly high rate is provided.

Pennsylvania's complicated and distinctive special "jointure" provisions do allow for intermediate agency participation in rather unique and not readily discernible financing arrangements for support of various regional educational activities. Basic taxing power for the intermediate unit is in the hands of the county commissioners, however.

#### Alameda, Contra-Costa, Riverside, and San Diego Counties, California

The four California service agencies have no taxing powers or bonding authority. Fiscal integrity and fiscal independence are not granted to the board of directors.

All three revenue sources provide funds for intermediate operations. The intermediate district's tax is levied by the county commissioners who also have some power over the budget.



Perhaps undue reliance is placed on voluntary contractual arrangements with local school districts. The result is that the level of participation by constituents varies considerably according to specific programs and services. The intermediate unit's financial support is thus not nearly as definite or as reliable as financial resources for the other two echelons of the state system.

The County Department of Education is supported to some extent by grants from the County Board of Supervisors. As is true in some other states, county commissioners help to support the intermediate unit by providing facilities and furnishing automobiles for some of the county superintendent's personnel.

#### Harris County, Texas

The usual three support resources are available to this county intermediate unit. State assistance, however, is relatively limited.

In substance, the Harris County Board of Education has both fiscal integrity and independence. The county's Board of Trustees does, however, have some prescribed perfunctory duties in regard to funds budgeted for county educational purposes.

A fairly high degree of emphasis is placed upon local district support of specific programs and services. Many intermediate functions are designed to assist the county's smaller school districts, and financing is somewhat limited by the fact that the City of Houston is not included in the county intermediate district.

Perhaps one of the weakest features in financing the intermediate unit stems from lack of authority to subsidize local sub-centers. This restriction on use of county funds for educational purposes was not noted in any other illustrative agency. Another weakness is lack of bonding authority.

#### Board of Cooperative Services, Erie, New York

This Board of Cooperative Educational Services is representative of a more permissive-participatory structure than is found in the traditional intermediate units. Support is derived basically from only two sources, state assistance and local school district funds.

The constituent districts provide the primary support for this service operation. The local districts determine the programs and services to be offered and are free to participate as they wish. Levels of participation naturally vary according to the activity in question, and the local administrative units then reimburse the cooperative board for

programs and services received. The Board, with no fiscal powers, cannot issue bonds.

### Federal Programs

Whenever the intermediate unit's sources of financial support are listed, federal contributions are typically considered to play a minor role. It appears, however, that federal grants are increasing in importance as a means of financing intermediate units. All illustrative agencies are deeply involved in federal programs.

Several of the illustrative units maintained extremely close liaison with federal agencies. Oakland and Wayne Counties in Michigan and Allegheny County in Pennsylvania placed particular emphasis on these contacts. Evidently, all illustrative agencies are taking advantage of their very favorable position as regional agencies. Because it serves its constituency on a regional basis, the intermediate unit is a natural recipient of many federal grants for regionally oriented projects. Therefore, federal funds as an important source of revenue for the middle echelon agency must be minimized now or in the foreseeable future.

## V. STAFFING

The general pattern in the illustrative agencies is for board appointment of staff upon recommendation of the superintendent, a recognized procedure in educational administration. Some slight exceptions to this pattern were noted in California where state civil service regulations occasionally have some bearing on staff selection. However, in most instances, the common pattern prevails even when the chief administrator is popularly elected.

High staff quality is one of the most striking characteristics of the twelve illustrative intermediate units visited. Excellent salary schedules and/or various other fringe benefits and privileges are the apparent keys to the successful recruitment of quality staff personnel.

In the few service agencies in which salaries are limited by statute, benefits including opportunities for advanced graduate study are used as incentives.

All intermediate districts visited are apparently large enough, in terms of total enrollment, to provide educational leadership challenges for middle echelon personnel. These operations are of ample size to frequently attract high quality personnel needed to accept the many

existing challenges. The district size is generally large enough to allow for a high degree of specialization by extremely well qualified personnel who are typically given the freedom to perform within their own speciality areas.

Chief administrators in most of the illustrative agencies are extremely active as recruiters. Mutual advantages, to the individual and the intermediate unit, of opportunities for advanced academic work and/or joint employment in institutions of higher education are often stressed. Several superintendents are quick to admit that they prefer the possibly short-term services of young staff members "on the way up." Such individuals are not committed to remain in their positions after gaining valuable experience and/or additional training.

## VI. LEGISLATION

Legal frameworks within which the sixteen illustrative agencies operate are extremely diverse. In effect, these sixteen intermediate units in eight different states operate under eight distinct legal structures.

Among the eight states, California's structure is by far the most rigid. Much of public education in California is regulated by detailed provisions spelled out in the extremely cumbersome state constitution which contains over 70,000 words and is considerably longer than the Constitution of the United States.

Although many extra-legal area and regional agreements are apparent, the California intermediate districts are bound to county lines by the state constitution. Typically in California is a situation observed in Alameda County. The Alameda Intermediate Unit's Board of Directors has very little power. This board once was composed of teachers from local school districts. The composition of the board has now been changed, but the cumbersome constitutional provisions for board functions have not. Therefore, the board's potential for meaningful contribution is severely hampered.

Paradoxically, some of the country's strongest intermediate operations are found in California. It is indeed significant that four of the sixteen intermediate agencies cited as illustrative in this study are located in that state. This is indeed a high tribute to the leadership in the California intermediate units.

Washington has new intermediate unit legislation. As a result, the two illustrative units in that state operate within two different legal frameworks.

The new legislation is vastly superior to the old. Among other aspects, it provides for an intermediate board of education. Fiscal integrity is now mandated, but there is no fiscal independence, and the county commissioners remain the taxing body. King County still names its superintendent in a popular election, a practice strongly criticized by virtually all writers in the field of school administration.

Multnomah County, Oregon, benefits from a more enlightened legal structure than is found in some other states. However, as previously mentioned, the intermediate board's financial powers and rights of program determination are restricted. Oregon's legal provisions for special education seem grossly inadequate, and the intermediate unit is therefore hindered in what could be a very valuable service function. Lack of a clear definition of the relationship between the intermediate unit and the state educational agency was also noted in Oregon.

Texas is handicapped by a single county structure with some territory excluded from the intermediate district. Limitations in Texas intermediate financing have also been cited.

Pennsylvania has proposed sweeping changes in its intermediate structure. Fiscal responsibility for the middle echelon unit would be incorporated into a proposed law, and county intermediate unit reorganization on a regional basis would be mandated. Pennsylvania's various special purpose "jointures" complicate the problem, however, as does the exclusion of some urban centers from the intermediate district.

New York's middle echelon service agencies are also subject to extensive change under terms of proposed legislation. Presently, the state does not really have intermediate units. Instead, voluntary and cooperative services are provided on a reimburseable basis. The service agency has no tax base of its own from which to draw support.

Michigan and Iowa, of the eight states, have what appears to be the best legal structures. Both define relationships and mandate some features of intermediate operation. Both, however, are permissive and allow for a degree of needed organizational flexibility.

Michigan's 5,000-pupil minimum is probably much too low. Mergers of county school systems in Iowa may be slow unless specific laws require intermediate unit reorganizations along regional lines. Lack of bonding authority and the right to hold real property may also eventually hinder intermediate unit development in Iowa.



In summary, it can be observed that the illustrative agencies have made remarkable progress even though some lack adequate legal structures. When the eight states are considered, some legislative weakness common to several of the eight can be noted. These include:

1. Lack of flexibility needed for functional and organizational changes.
2. Lack of legal provisions for intermediate district reorganization on a regional basis.
3. Lack of recognition as a full partner in the state's educational system. Particularly evident are many violations of financial support criteria resulting in the revenue sources of the intermediate unit not being as definite or reliable as those provided for the local and state echelons.
4. Specific lack of fiscal integrity and independence, including taxing powers, for some intermediate district boards of education.
5. Lack of a total approach to systematic reorganization of all educational echelons.
6. Lack of organization within an overall framework with some delegation of responsibility to intermediate boards for a degree of program and service determination.
7. Lack of authority to incur bonded indebtedness and to hold title to real property.

## VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The illustrative agencies used in this analysis are primarily single-county units rather than the recommended broader regional service agencies. In terms of the pupil population criterion, fifteen of the sixteen units could be classified as "large." Shiawasee County, Michigan, the one exception, has 18,000 students.

Several of the illustrative units encompass fairly compact geographic areas. The smallest area is approximately 400 square miles and the largest, a single county unit in California, embraces 7,200 square miles. The "one hour or less driving time" standard is met in ten of the sixteen intermediate districts.

Thirteen of the sixteen intermediate units are primarily urban, while two others have both urban and rural characteristics. All sixteen have some exemplary programs and services and therefore are model operations in at least some respects. Most are extremely sensitive and responsive to local needs and have developed excellent coordination and communication with constituent school districts. The "program mix" of these units is generally dependent on local district needs. Their relations with other governmental units and various civic and community agencies are, in general, excellent.

Several illustrative units have outstanding instructional materials centers. At least four sophisticated computer installations were noted, and at least two of the service agencies have model clinical services. Most of the units provide extremely high caliber consultative services to constituent districts, and several outstanding in-service education programs were observed.

Most of the illustrative agencies have assumed what has been termed "a non-threatening posture" coupled with an obvious willingness to serve the local school districts. Administrators and staff in several of the units clearly perceive their role as that of providing leadership and promoting innovation. According to this point of view, the intermediate district, because of its middle echelon position in the total state system, is freed from some of the fundamental constraints that habitually bind the local school districts and, to some degree, the state agency. Therefore, the intermediate office is often free to be innovative and creative and to develop model programs and services.

The illustrative intermediate districts are, in general, staffed with well qualified and highly specialized professional personnel. These agencies recruit actively and frequently offer various incentives in addition to excellent salaries. Very pertinent in this regard are close relationships with institutions of higher education. Staff members are given the time and opportunity for advanced graduate training and frequently earn advanced degrees while employed by the intermediate office. Intermediate staff members often serve as part-time college or university faculty members and thus maintain extremely close contacts with colleges and universities in the area.

The sixteen agencies clearly demonstrate the increasing importance of federal funding for various projects and programs. Because many of the newer federal programs are regionally oriented, the intermediate unit is often the key agency for developing proposals, receiving funds, and operating or administering programs.

### Strength in Urban Situations

As previously stated, thirteen of sixteen illustrative intermediate units are situated in predominately urban areas. Of the remaining three, two have some urban characteristics. Most of the agencies could be included among the country's better intermediate service operations. They are, however, "urban situated" and thus tend to dispute claims that the intermediate unit's strength is in rural areas.

Many of these agencies serve suburban school districts to the exclusion of the central city's school system. A large proportion of the suburban districts are sizeable in terms of enrollment when compared with basic administrative units in rural sections. Thus, it would appear that suburban area intermediate districts have ample pupil populations. Such is frequently not the case in rural areas where county intermediate units have been slow to restructure themselves into broader regional educational service agencies. Therefore, the population and resources needed for full intermediate functioning are lacking in the very places in which local district needs for regional programs and services are most obvious.

Even within a single state, vast differences in intermediate unit operational quality can be noted when suburban area middle echelon agencies are compared with their predominately rural counterparts.

### Structural Limitations

Effective middle echelon service agencies operate under a variety of conditions, particularly with regard to legal structures. For example, only nine of the sixteen illustrative units are governed by popularly elected lay boards, a generally accepted recommendation. Three have boards selected by a delegate assembly of constituent school district boards of education. Boards of directors for three other agencies are selected from among local district board members, and one illustrative agency has no board.

Eleven of the intermediate districts follow the recommendation for board appointment of the chief administrator. Five highly regarded service agencies continue the practice of superintendent selection by popular vote of the electorate.

The ideal criteria for intermediate district financing are commonly violated in at least eleven illustrative operations. Except in Michigan, the intermediate units have no bonding authority, and power to levy taxes has not been granted to several of the illustrative agencies. Undue

emphasis on financial support through voluntary cooperative agreements often exists. As a result, the financial sources of the middle echelon are frequently not as definite or as reliable as those provided for the local and state echelons.

Reliance on voluntary cooperative agreements and subsequent payment for services gives rise to a significant question. Theoretically, at least, the intermediate service agency is seen as an equalizer of educational opportunity. Extreme dependence on local district financing of needed intermediate programs and services could perhaps minimize this unit's opportunity to perform its equalizing functions. It is entirely possible that school districts most in need of services may be least able to provide the necessary financial support.

Possibly, the intermediate unit's role as an equalizer is best expedited through the provision of its taxing base and through state support. Spreading the tax burden over the entire intermediate district can have a definite equalizing effect. The state agency can also perform an equalization function by subsidizing certain intermediate activities.

When financial aspects and other factors are considered, it can only be concluded that the intermediate unit is often not seen as an integral component of the total state system for public education. The intermediate district frequently does not enjoy equality of rights in financing and other educational matters.

Of particular significance is the fact that legal structures in some states specifically exclude certain areas from the intermediate districts. The large metropolitan center, in particular, is usually excluded either by statute or actual practice. Exclusion of the central city may seriously limit the effectiveness of intermediate unit operations.

As reported in Chapter II, the core city may also suffer if it is not a part of the intermediate district. The city school system because of its exclusion may be deprived of needed services, but the regional approach to the solution of metropolitan problems should be of even greater concern. Because most modern city problems are not confined to the core city, affiliation with a regional educational service agency and cooperative efforts directed at the solution of regional problems are deemed essential. This affiliation would permit area educational planning to be more closely related to regional planning.

It is interesting to note that some of the nation's strongest intermediate service units are in California, a state with perhaps the most cumbersome constitutional provisions for education. Change at the intermediate level is particularly difficult, but much has been accomplished



outside the constitutional framework. It can only be assumed that California's middle echelon agencies succeed in spite of the structural framework within which they operate.

In earlier portions of this report the intermediate unit's possible effect on school district reorganization was discussed. It was noted that comprehensive programs and services from the intermediate agency might deter reorganization in some areas as educational opportunities were equalized or that the intermediate unit might become less essential when adequate local school districts were created.

Many illustrative agencies however, adhere to the "spin-off concept." These units in determining their program mix operate certain programs or provide specific services until the local districts, individually or in combination, are in a position to assume the responsibility. The particular function is then phased out. The program mix is continuously redefined to meet changing conditions and needs.

The regional educational service agency does indeed have a meaningful future. Many educational functions will require a regional approach and herein lies the future of the intermediate unit. It can only be hoped that through restructuring, the intermediate units located in rural can soon match the achievements of those situated in suburban areas. Further, it is hoped that the large-city school system will become part of the intermediate unit in situations where it is now excluded.